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HERETICAL DOCTRINES
OF THE
PLYMOUTH BRETHREN:

SHewing
THEIR IDENTITY WITH THOSE OF THE MANICHEES.

PRECEDED BY ESSAYS ON
THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE INCARNATION,
OBEDIENCE, AND SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST;

AND FOLLOWED BY A SKETCH OF THE
PRINCIPLES, RISE, AND FALL OF THE PEOPLE TERMED
PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.

BY ONE
UNKNOWN—YET WELL KNOWN



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P R E F A C E.

HE who wades through the chaos of conflicting statements and opposing doctrines, by which the little world of christians, called "Plymouth Brethren," has been convulsed and broken up, will rise from the study with one very clear conviction; a conviction which furnishes the clue to their existing disorganization; namely, that their theological views are deficient in a point of *vital* importance.

They seem to have been so accustomed to regard the mission of Christ in its self-evident bearing upon the sons of Adam, as to have quite overlooked the fact that other beings have fallen besides those of the human race, and that it might therefore be possible, the mission of Christ had some sort of reference to them also.

But the scriptures do, nevertheless, afford sufficient ground to conclude that the purpose of God in the incarnation of His Son, *had* an aspect towards all who have fallen, whether of the Angelic or Adamic races. Was it not to draw our attention to this very thing, that the scriptures so pointedly note that Christ was "made a little lower than the angels," *as well as*, that he was "the Second Adam?" Was it not that we might compare these statements, with those others which tell us that angels "have sinned," as well as man, and so guide us to the conclusion, that the purpose of God in Christ, contemplated and bore upon the state of evil, *generally*, whether in Angels or in men?

This does not seem to have occurred to the Brethren; yet might they, assuredly, have learned somewhat at least of it, from the mere words of God to the serpent; for those words imply, not only the defeating of *Satan's* device, for the destruction of the race which was to spring from the woman, but also that her seed (which is Christ,) should bring destruction upon the head of Satan himself.

Nor has this twofold purpose of the incarnation of Christ, been unnoticed in the New Testament. On the contrary, it was pointedly referred to by himself, in the words "Now is the judgment of *this world*; now shall the *prince* of this world be cast out;" and in Heb. ii. 9—14, it is expressly declared that

He was made a little lower than the angels,—a partaker of flesh and blood,—in the *two-fold* view of tasting of death for every man, and of, through death, destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Incorrect perception of outline leads, of *necessity*, to inaccuracy in matters of detail, and when the former is wholly lost sight of, it cannot but follow that the latter will cease to have any real affinity to the original design.

This is a mere truism in things of this world, nor is it a whit less so in things divine. Insufficient views of the general scope and objects of truth will assuredly vitiate our conceptions of it in its particular branches, and this has been emphatically the case with the Plymouth Brethren.

Having at the outset overlooked the aspect of the incarnation of Christ, in its condemnation to angels, they were led another step out of the way, for they overlooked also its aspect of condemnation to man, and have come to regard the salvation of the church as the *alone* object of Christ's mission on the earth. It has resulted from this one-sided view, that seeing no sort of necessity, for the glorious purpose of salvation, of the *bond fide* humanity and obedience through sufferings of Christ, they have ended in the virtual denial that He was man; that He did obey and did suffer.

The Brethren, therefore, having had no original perception of the absolute necessity to the glory of God in the great day of judgment, of the *bond fide* humanity of Christ, have utterly disregarded the jealous care of God in the scriptures to assert that Christ came in the flesh, and have also evinced their real *unbelief* of that which, in words, they are most forward to assert, viz. that Christ has glorified God upon the earth. Wherefore they have not been able to keep to the scriptures, even in the limited view of the mission of Christ, which they chose for themselves.

They have not understood in what respect Christ is said to have glorified God upon the earth. Those words imply, both that no other *had* done so, *and* that some other had *failed* to do so. But the Scriptures testify that failure to glorify God is nigh akin to giving occasion (pretence or excuse) for the blaspheming of His name! Had the Brethren reflected, they would have discerned that there existed a question of some kind, inferring occasion of glory, or the opposite, whose solution *must* lie between the *two Adams*. God has never been (so to speak) immediately concerned, but in the production of *two* Adams alone. The Scriptures recognize none other. The first was characterized by disobedience, the second by obedience, and these *results* give the clue to the purpose of God; they evince that purpose to have been that the obedience of the second Adam should discredit, refute, and abolish some infer-

ence to the dishonour of the great name of God, which, the failure of the first Adam might otherwise seem to warrant.

The nature of that inference may be seen in the writings and opinions of open and disguised infidels of every age. The former, have not hesitated to assert, and to base their assertion upon the word of God himself, that to Him alone, either by design or by defect of creation of the first man, are imputable all the evils which are now in the world, and all those which may follow in eternity, by his fall. The latter class, more under the dominion of fear, while seemingly exalting the goodness of the Creator, no less essentially, though more covertly, charge Him with the alone responsibility, both for the creation and fall of the creatures He has made; and thus, while only professing to prove He *cannot*, they in fact arraign the justice of his solemn declaration that He *will*, eternally punish sinners.*

This latter, no less than the former class, have derived their thoughts and hopes from him who "blinds the minds of those who believe not." The position also of the angels, who have sinned, is precisely analogous to that of the hardened among men, wherefore it is a conclusion based on no imaginary grounds, that the origin of the blasphemous ascription to God of the authorship of evil, rests with Satan and his angels alone. Hence the necessity, to the glory of God, that one, made a little lower than the angels, made also of a woman, should, in that condition of being, by a *bonâ fide* obedience unto death, vindicate the glory of God, in the very article which, but for that *bonâ fide* obedience, would be at this moment, and to eternity, in question.

But the failure of the Brethren to comprehend in what respect Christ has vindicated the glory of God, has led them also, and of necessity, to low apprehensions of his obedience through *suffering*. Some of them restrict those sufferings to a mere sympathy, and *that* only in the sorrows of a portion of mankind; others of them, by blending together the ideas of sufferings and *sin*, have made it a fearful thing to believe he suffered at all; and one of them

* Note.—A correspondent of "The Universalist," in its supplementary number for January, 1852, proposes twelve questions, whose object is *to turn the Scriptures against God himself!* These are a few of them. 2. "If God hates his enemies, why should we love our enemies? Are we required to be better than God? If God loves only those who love him, in what respect is he better than a sinner?" Luke vi. 32, 33.—4. "If man does wrong in returning evil for evil, would not God do wrong if he were to return evil for evil? Would not the infliction of endless punishment be proof positive, that God was returning evil for evil?"—9. "Would it be merciful in God to inflict endless punishment?"—"Can that be just which is not merciful? Do not cruelty and injustice go hand in hand?"

has gone the length of representing Christ's sufferings upon the cross, in the light of a mere fiction, unsupported by any circumstance of reality!

These horrible opinions have arisen from total ignorance of the purposes of God in the sufferings of Christ. If we view those sufferings in but *one* of their purposes, we see the designed contrast between the two Adams. The first fell without one single circumstance which even *seems* to palliate his disobedience. If this had remained a solitary fact : if there existed no proof to the contrary, the conclusion might have seemed (as it has seemed to some,) irresistible, that Adam was *so created*, as to be unable to contend against the mere pressure of temptation.

But the refutation of that thought has come by means of the second Adam. It has come, not from one in merely the same circumstances of trial which had sufficed to overthrow the first man, but from one who had to contend against every conceivable obstacle which the united energies of the devil and man, could devise to hinder him. It is this which enhances the glory of Christ's obedience. His perseverance, namely, in despite of sufferings ; it is this which has so eminently vindicated the glory of God. To limit those sufferings under any pretext whatever, or to represent them as having been fulfilled by a shameful illusion, worthy only of the heathen oracles of God, is to incur a degree of guilt of which they who have written such things, have not even an idea.

To discern the true nature of an error, it is needful to see clearly the nature of the truth to which it is opposed. The design, therefore, of the papers which precede the examination of the false doctrines of the Brethren, is to present the simple and obvious views of the purposes of God in the incarnation, obedience, and sufferings of Christ, in a degree of prominence, proportioned to the degree in which they have been ignored or suppressed by them.

It has been the neglect of the most simple and palpable truths, which has led the Plymouth Brethren into a deep abyss of error and heresy, in which the greater portion of them now appear to rest and slumber in the most truculent security.

PRELIMINARY ESSAYS.

PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE INCARNATION—IN THE OBEDIENCE—IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

I.

PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

IN ITS ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ANGELS WHO HAVE SINNED.

THERE is no idea more essentially reasonable than that which ascribes to the Creator a just, absolute and indefeasible right over the works, whether animate or inanimate, of his own hands. Neither is there any idea which is more pertinaciously insisted upon by men, in their own concerns. They claim an undoubted right of property in the works of their hands, and if that right be so much as questioned they term it injustice. They assert the same claim over the children they beget; they expect from them both submission and love, quite irrespectively of whether they may have deserved either the one or the other, for even where parents have been notoriously harsh and unkind, they do not suppose *that* ought to excuse or can excuse any lack of submission or love; but are, on the contrary, forward to brand such a lack of submission or love, with terms implying the absence, in their children, of right feeling.

Wherefore men do, in their own practice, universally justify the principle which ascribes to the Creator a just right to the absolute disposal and control of the works of his hands. But while they themselves insist upon that principle where their own rights are in question, they are, nevertheless, found to impugn it, so soon as it is brought to bear upon their own responsibility to the great Father of all. They are *then* full of subtle arguments and profoundly evasive excuses, which, nevertheless, they would neither hear nor admit the force of for a moment, from the lips of their own offspring.

Men are, therefore, themselves practically evincing that precise line of thought and conduct, which in their own children, they both would and do brand with "absence of right feeling."

It is the province of the Scriptures to reveal whence that perverseness of mind has come. They declare that it (together with all the misery which belongs to it) had its rise in the introduction into this world of a principle of evil which is termed sin, which was brought in by means of the subtle device of one, who himself belonged to the angelic race.

The term "angel," seems to designate an entire race, or class of beings, and those other terms by which some of them are distinguished, as Cherubim,

Seraphim, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, appear to intimate the existence of degrees of glory, rank, or position in the angelic hosts.

The Scriptures do not afford us much information on the nature of angels; but enough to warrant the belief that, in many respects, they as greatly excel man, as man excels the beasts which perish.

Proportionably greater, therefore, was their responsibility to him who created them. This idea is universally acknowledged among men. They expect much from those to whom they have given or confided much, and their expectation is essentially a right one. We find Christ, while adverting to that principle of thought, assuring us that the Creator will himself act upon it; he says, "To whom much is given, from him *shall* much be required." Wherefore, in proportion to the excellency of the nature, exaltedness of the position, and ability to understand and appreciate the goodness of God, in which the angels were created, must have been the exceedingly great and awful nature of their accountability.

The Scriptures give us plainly to understand that some of the angels suffered themselves to disregard that responsibility, and to dare the consequences of disobedience. We read in Jude 6, of some who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation; and in 2 Peter ii. 4, of some that "*sinned*." Both apostles appear to refer to the same body of angels, for they are described as "reserved in chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day."

It is no less certain that vast numbers of fallen angels, of whom Satan is the prince, remain at liberty as yet; and, finally, it is equally certain from the pages of Scripture that the entire number of angels who have sinned will, at the judgment of the great day, be *for ever* cast into the lake of fire, and this enables us to appreciate in some degree the estimate of the responsibility of angels which has been formed by their Creator.

There is sufficient reason to conclude that the sinning of the angels took place antecedently to the creation of man. As this is of deep importance, let us enter into its consideration.

Either Satan *was*, when he tempted Eve, already a rebel against the most high God, or he was *not*. If he was not, we are to conclude that evil entered his mind for the first time when he saw the newly-created pair; that he then tempted Eve, and became thenceforth a sinner. But such a conclusion as that, sets both analogy and experience at entire defiance. To suppose that an angel, without any previous deterioration of mind, suddenly conceived and executed evil, is to infer that angels were *created* in a more deplorable condition of moral weakness than we ascribe even to man in his *fallen* state. For, that "*none was ever wicked at once*," has been in all ages considered true, to an adage, of fallen man, and shall we suppose it less so of an angel *before* he had fallen?

But waiving, for the moment, the instance of Satan, in what way are we to account for the fall of the myriads of angels whom the Scriptures link with him? Are we to conclude that they too were *at once* moved with an evil sympathy with the tempter, and therefore "kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation?" We are, upon the supposition that there had been no rebellion among the angels previously to the fall of Adam, driven to conclude that simply out of sheer sympathy with evil, the angels who have fallen joined Satan after he had tempted Eve, and had been himself *sentenced* too! We

are so because the Scriptures distinctly represent the fall of man as the work of Satan *alone*.

But that would indeed be a monstrous supposition. What idea of angels, or of God who created them, can the mind have which can believe that beings so exalted in their nature, while hitherto incorrupt, could upon the mere presentation of evil—of evil judged, too, be induced to rush at once to side with and share in the ruin of the tempter? Such an idea will not be for a moment entertained by a rightly-balanced judgment, and there remains therefore, only the conclusion that the fall of angels took place before the creation of man.

We may here observe that the Lord's words, "The devil *and his angels*," naturally suggests, and has always been understood to signify, both the headship of the former and the *oneness* in evil both of him and them; and his intimation that the everlasting fire was prepared *for them*, warrants the belief there existed, in the divine purpose at least, a future judgment for them, quite irrespectively of, and antecedently to, the creation of man.

The entrance of evil among the angels marks, therefore, an epoch in the history of creation, prior to that of the creation of man.

We might, without any especial warrant of Scripture, not unreasonably conclude, that the subsequent creation of man had some reference to that state of things. Is it possible, (we might argue) that the Creator could look with an eye of indifference upon the evil which had entered among so glorious an order of his creatures? The punishment of *some* of them proves the contrary. But wherefore had not *all* of them met the same fate? If the vindication of his authority had been the Creator's alone end, *that* would have been at once attained by the simultaneous punishment of all the disobedient. Wherefore, the *as yet* unpunished state of some of the fallen angels, both suggests and warrants the belief, that *some other object* did exist in the divine mind, which would not have been attained by the summary punishment of the whole of the disobedient.

And if we reflect that nothing can be hidden from God, that he must, therefore, have foreseen that the evil which had entered among the angels would be brought into connection with the beings he was now about to create, in the very face, as it were, of such a state of things, the connection of man *with that other object* will seem invested with a degree of probability amounting almost to certainty.

It is perhaps no unreasonable conclusion, that the purpose of God in creating Adam was, that by means of the continuance in obedience of one, made lower still than the angels, the great condemnation in which they, created so much higher than he, stood, might be manifest by the contrast; or, failing that, if Adam too should disobey, then by his medium, and that of his descendants, to evidence through their lower nature, both the fearful character of the evil principle and its utter incompatibility with good; whereby the final destruction of the agencies in whom that principle exists, will, in the great day when God will judge the world, be seen as not merely *just*, but to the glory of God imperatively necessary.

Two inferences may seem to be suggested by the above, which it is needful to meet.

1st. Do they give any colour to the thought that God purposed the entrance of evil? *God forbid!*

We are expressly told that God *created* both Adam and Eve in his *own* image, by which we are doubtless (for it cannot be understood of *form* or *shape*) to understand the *moral* image of God; and that supposes a perfect rectitude, without any the least *bias* towards evil. But as a creature not *infinite*, the continuance of Adam in the image of God necessarily depended upon his not departing from it of his *own* motion. Any exercise of the will which was in opposition to the will of God, would *constitute* a departure from the *moral* image of God. While, therefore, failure was a possible contingency, that failure depended upon Adam *alone*; and of this he was fully and solemnly warned by the Creator. It is scarcely possible to conceive of *subjection*, without the idea of something by which *insubjection* is defined and may be known; or of *control*, without the idea of some term or limit by which it is asserted. God, therefore, appointed a test of obedience to the pair whom he had created. He distinctly forewarned them of the consequence which would accrue to them if they disobeyed his prohibition, "in the day they ate they would *die*." God also distinctly apprised them of the *nature* of the tree of which he forbade them to eat; he called it the tree of knowledge of good *and evil*. In these words it was plain that it was of the entrance of *evil* knowledge *alone* they were forewarned; the result proves that.

What circumstances *can* more fully vindicate the name of God from the thought that He designed or desired the fall of his creatures?

2nd. Does the supposition that God created man with the foreknowledge that he would fall, sanction the thought that he has *purposed* that the eternal consequences of the entrance of sin should necessarily result to those whom he created at the first, or to any of their descendants? God forbid! We read in Gen. i. 28, that when God created the man and the woman in his own image, *he blessed them*; and in Gen. v. 2, the same thing is repeated, but with the additional circumstance that God blessed them *in the day* when they were created. When we consider the immutability of the character and of the word of God; that He does not repent, change, or draw back from that which he has once given, we perceive that in the very day in which God created the man and woman, his blessing placed them *at once* beyond the possibility that any eternal result of condemnation *could* befall them as a consequence of their creation. They had been blessed by the Creator, and thus his truthfulness to himself was their shield from the eternal consequences which might otherwise—but for that previous blessing—have seemed a contemplated result, necessarily accruing from the Creator's foreknowledge of the success of Satan's efforts to overthrow the newly-created pair.

And if we turn to the aspect of evil upon the descendants of Adam, we shall perceive that the Creator has never designed that its eternal consequences should rest upon any one of them, as a necessary result of the fall.

Before any offspring had been even begotten by the newly-created pair, (for it was not until they had been expelled from Eden that Adam knew his wife, Gen. iv. 1,) God gave the promise of one who should bruise the serpent's head, meaning thereby in its purport towards man, the frustrating of his device for their ruin. From that moment a door of escape from the eternal consequences of the entrance of sin was set open before the fallen pair, *not for themselves*, for they were already within its sanctuary, but for their offspring—even for all who should spring from them; and so Adam evidently.

understood it, for he changed his wife's name. He had called her "woman," now he called her "Eve"—"because" (so Adam judged) "she was the mother of all *living*." Nothing can more conclusively evince Adam's belief that the aspect of the everlasting covenant in the promised seed, was one of life towards all who should be born of Eve.

It is not seen from Adam's words alone, but from those of God himself, that his design in the promised seed was to afford a *free* escape from the eternal consequences of the entrance of sin, to *all* the descendants of Adam. It is for this very reason that the cases of Cain and Abel occupy so prominent a place. They were the first-born of the now sinful Adam, and that which may be gathered from them, must necessarily apply, in principle, to all his other descendants.

In process of time, Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to God. But Abel brought a *sacrifice of blood*, an *offering of blood* to God. The offering of Cain was not regarded—that of Abel *visibly accepted*.

The Scriptures in another place give us the *key* to this. "By *faith* Abel offered unto God a *more excellent* sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was *righteous*, God testifying of his gifts." (Heb. xi. 4.) That is to say Abel pleaded the blood of the everlasting covenant—he had *faith* in the atoning blood of the promised seed, and was accepted as righteous; that is, he *had escaped* the consequences (eternal condemnation) of the entrance of sin by Adam's means.

Cain on the other hand had no such faith; he would do according to his own pleasure. In *that* he had not done *well*; and was therefore not accepted. His countenance fell, and he was angry.

The words, at once of gentle expostulation, encouragement, and of warning, which were addressed to Cain by the Lord, are both the counterpart of the language he is now holding to all men, "beseeching sinners to be reconciled to himself;" and establish beyond dispute that *he* had no desire that Cain should perish, but rather that he should come to repentance. "And the Lord said unto Cain, why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well *shalt thou not be accepted?* (and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door) and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him!" (Gen. iv. 3—8.) In these words Cain was told, that the rejection of his offering had arisen from no partiality to Abel, but was the alone result of *his* not having done *well*,—(that is, according to the will of God) in the offering he had brought. Yet—he was told—the door was still open; that, if he would do *well*, as Abel had done, he would certainly be accepted, and that the further results of such obedience would be, that he should continue in his place of superiority over his brother, as the first-born, and be of necessity therefore the heir of Adam's *blessing*. But with these words of gentle expostulation, there was solemn warning mingled; they have been marked with parentheses, and are introduced with a singular beauty, reminding us rather of the mode of speech of a parent to a sullen child. The warning is but *touched upon*, and then the thread of expostulation and promise is resumed. But it was solemnly declared to Cain that he was on the very threshold of sin.

Cain would not hear, neither would he offer the blood of lambs. Wherefore the sin, of which he had been forewarned, entered his soul, and he shed the blood which cried to God, not for pardon, but for vengeance alone.

He who will ponder these things will (unless like Cain he prefers his own

thoughts to those of God), not fail to see the essential distinction between fore-knowledge and design. The former is essentially of a passive character, and before men can wring from it any theory implying an active purpose of the Creator against his creatures, they must set aside the opposite inference so plainly discernible in the details of the fall, and contradict his own word, that "He wills *not* that any should perish, but that *all* shall come to the knowledge of the truth."

In seeking to meet the evil which might seem couched under the assumption that the purpose of God in creating man was to bring, by his medium, the nature of evil to its full manifestation and final decision, we have arrived at the perception that such a purpose did not necessarily involve the eternal ruin either of the first man, or of any of his descendants. But that is not all. We may justly affirm, that the provision of a way of escape, available to all, *amounts to a positive protest, on the part of the Creator himself, against the thought that he has designed or desired that any should perish as a consequence of his act in the creation of Adam*: for there can be no necessity to perish where a free way of escape has been provided.

Let us now trace the result of man's creation upon Satan, and those of the angels who are linked with him in evil.

The idea which resolves Satan's motive in seeking the overthrow of Adam into simple envy, or into a simple desire to act in opposition to God, seems very inadequate to the occasion.

It is much more probable that he *felt* that God's purpose in the creation of Adam, bore in some way upon himself. We can see, that if Adam had maintained a perfect conformity to the will of God, that fact would have borne upon him in condemnation. If we consider the comparative feebleness of the newly-created pair, measuring it only by the fact that they were limited to the spot which had been created for them, and of whose very dust they had been made, while he, a being by creation of incomparably greater glory and power, whose energies even space itself can scarcely be said to limit, was yet, in *one* thing, *their inferior*! They had the blessing of God, while he had it not; and should they *continue* in the sunshine of that blessing, how deeply degrading—how full of condemnation would that fact be to him! What, to him, was all his own personal glory and power, so long as one sat, *upon the ground of personal integrity*, "in the king's gate?" Satan therefore resolved to overthrow Adam, and he attained to it by means of the woman.

By this most evil act, Satan let loose upon the world both the terrible evil of the death of the body, and all other miseries, of what kind soever, which have resulted to the human race in consequence of it. But it is not only as opening the flood-gates of evil that the fearful power of the evil principle in Satan is seen; it is seen no less in the fact that he and his angels have thrown their whole energies into incessant efforts to foster the principle of evil which himself brought in, and to aggravate it into continual outbreaks of adultery, murder, and depravity: it is seen, finally, and yet more fearfully, in the fact that both he and they are unceasingly occupied in blinding the eyes of men to the sole way of escape from the entrance of sin which the mercy of God has provided in Christ; and thus, not only the original fall of man is traceable to Satan, but their final and eternal ruin, will have been the alone work of his hands! How fearful the manifestation of the nature of the principle of evil, in its effects upon Satan and his angels, has he himself made by means of men.

It may be summed up in the words perfect, immitigable hatred to God and to man.

But in the very hour in which Satan overcame Adam, he found he had done so to *his own ruin*. He found that if God's purpose in the creation of Adam had been frustrated in *one aspect* of its condemning power upon him, it was nevertheless still to bear upon him in another, and yet more terrible manner.

There can be little doubt Satan had no conception whatever that the "death" which was attached to the eating of the tree, had any other meaning than the entrance of sin. His words to Eve clearly evince that he perfectly well understood "*evil knowledge*" would be the result of their eating; for he told her *more* than God had seen fit to reveal. Satan said, "God doth know that *in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened.*" Satan therefore plainly understood that the effect of eating of the tree would be the entrance of sin, but his words so artfully disguised that fact, that Eve was induced to expect increase of understanding alone—of a wisdom which should make her *as God*. She therefore ate of the tree, as did Adam, and straightway, even as Satan had said, "the eyes of them both *were* opened"—but it was to a perception of *evil alone*,"—"they knew they were naked,"—and were ashamed: a feeling to which before they had eaten of the tree they were entire strangers. (See Gen. ii. 25.) This was therefore that for which Satan had wrought.

The conclusion is irresistible, that he had no conception whatever of the *death of the body* as a circumstance which was also to follow by the sentence of God, and which was to bring, in its consequences, irretrievable ruin upon his own head.

After hearing the statements of Adam and Eve, the first words of the Creator were addressed to the tempter. The aspect of the promised seed was that of destruction to the tempter *personally*.

The sentence of the death of the body, which was passed at the same time upon Adam, revealed to Satan *the means* by which his destruction would be accomplished. Even, therefore, from the moment he had deceived Eve, the hours began to strike, which would in the fulness of their time, eventuate in the incarnation and death of the promised seed of the woman, and terminate in the irretrievable ruin of Satan and of all who are linked with him. The promise, to the poor beings whom he had deceived, of the future rising of the Sun of Righteousness, to shine for ever in an unbroken day of blissful eternity; hoded no less to the deceiver, the coming of an eternal night—that final separation of *darkness* from light, in a place which will be *lurid, not light*, with the burning of the lake of fire and brimstone *for ever!* And herein will Satan, in due time, experience the fulfilment of that word of God, "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray into an evil path, *he shall fall himself into his own pit.*" (Prov. xxviii. 10.)

We have thus traced the purpose of God in the creation of man to one of its ends, viz., the prospective destruction of the tempter, and of all of his own race who are linked with him in evil. That destruction is as yet future, for the bruising of the serpent's head will have its final accomplishment only when he shall be cast into the lake of fire for ever; and of that event the Apostle wrote more than 1800 years ago, "The Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet *shortly.*" To us that time still appears remote, but we must remember, that "one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as but one day: and we, ourselves, shall, when the great day of judgment is

passed away, and has been succeeded by an unbroken day of happy eternity, look back upon what we now deem the *slow progress of time*, and confess both that it was as short as a dream of the night, and that *the character* of the delay itself was that of *salvation*. 2 Peter iii. 7—15.

The destruction of Satan was, however, neither the sole, nor even the *chief* object which was contemplated and has been effected by the creation of man, and its consequence the incarnation of Christ. What that chief object was, is plainly revealed in the words of the Apostle to the Gentiles in his Epistle to the Ephesians, ch. iii. 8—11. "Unto me . . . is this grace given that I should . . . make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,"

"Who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The *chief object*, therefore, of the creation of all things by Christ, is declared to have been the manifestation to angels of the wisdom of God by the Church. The Apostle's words have been divided in order that his meaning may be more strikingly apparent. He asserts, that, in pursuance of an eternal purpose *in Christ*, God created all things by him, *in order that, now* his wisdom might be known to the angelic hosts, (here as elsewhere termed principalities and powers in heavenly places) *by the Church*.

When we come to inquire into the meaning of these words, we shall see abundant reason to declare their application to the masses of mankind; so that if we see cause to praise the grace which has snatched us from destruction, we shall no less admire the wisdom which has ordained that the ruin of those who perish shall arise solely out of their own rejection of his grace. The world is finally to be convinced of sin, *because* they believed not in Christ.

But before proceeding to that consideration, it may be well to advert to one or two other points connected with it. The Apostle's words plainly assert that God was acting by him for the *present* purpose of making *all men see* what is *the fellowship* of that mystery which had been hid in God from the beginning of the world. By these words we are to understand the earnest desire of the Creator that his fallen creature, man, should both understand and embrace that fellowship. This appears to be, that by faith in Christ, men receive an entire remission of sin, a perfect reconciliation with God, and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by the like precious faith. They are, thenceforth, from believing, fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of the household of God, as well as of the same body with the true Israel; and in its highest sense, their "fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." That is the fellowship of the mystery; that is man's glorious part in it. It is a fellowship which is open to the acceptance of every child of Adam; it is a part which the Creator is represented as earnestly beseeching them to lay hold of, in the words of the Gospel call, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, *we pray you*, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God: for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in him*."

Great and terrible is the responsibility of one who neglects so great salvation, for it is written, "He will render to every man according to his deeds; to

them who are *contentious* (cavil at the word) and do not obey *the truth*, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

Let us also consider, that since the Apostle's words place the angels in the very exalted position of those who are able to understand and appreciate the wisdom of God, as that wisdom is displayed in the Church, it should lead us also to take large views of his truth. We should strive to look above the mere letter of the Scriptures to the things which are taught us therein. It may be well enough, when an isolated doctrine or fact is in question, to keep closely to the mere verses in which they are conveyed, but where the subject is so vast as "the manifold wisdom of God," we should rather expect to find it developed in the grand principles upon which he has declared he does act, than in narrow or partial views of truth. We may hope to gather somewhat, at the least, of that which is said to be *now* apparent to the angels, because we have the record of God's dealings with man, and it is from those dealings the angels have learned the manifold wisdom of God.

II.

PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST,

IN ITS ESPECIAL BEARING UPON THE DISOBEDIENT, BOTH OF ANGELS AND MEN.

We are now to inquire in what particular the wisdom of God is known by the Church.

That wisdom must be known either by some excellency in the nature or in the works of those who compose the Church; or else by some excellency in the means by which God has saved them.

But neither of the two former suppositions can be the case, for as to the first viz. that there is any excellency in the nature of those who compose the Church, is explicitly contradicted by the Scriptures, which state of all those who have been brought into it, that they were once *dead in sin*, and were *by nature* children of wrath, even as others; that is, as all men are by nature. Besides which, it is declared with equal plainness to be one of the especial objects of God by the Church to confound natural pretensions, by choosing the weak things of this world; from which it is apparent that natural excellency is rather with those who are *not* of the Church than with those who belong to it. (1 Cor. i. 26—29.)

Nor, in the second place, can the works of the Church be said to have any such excellency; because as the works of each individual composing it both are, and ever have been, confessedly, of the character of short-coming and imperfection, it necessarily follows that the united works of the Church also *come short* and are imperfect. It is impossible the Church can have done as a body, that which no individual has ever done, namely—fully met the design

of God in him. In such a question as this no aggregate of particles, each in itself imperfect, can go to make up a perfect whole. If, therefore, each individual has failed to meet the fulness of God's purpose in, and expectation from him, the entire Church must have also failed.

We cannot, therefore, suppose that angels could offer, or that God could accept, an ascription of praise which could justly arise only out of that which is *not the fact*, viz., that the Church has fully appreciated and perfectly met the design of God by her.

We must therefore conclude, that the wisdom of God, known to the angels by the Church, is to be sought in the *means* by which he has redeemed it to himself. What then is that means?

While the Lord Jesus Christ, in the words "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," declared the broad aspect upon all men of the Gospel which he was anointed to preach, he *also*, on various occasions, intimated, that by reason of some *natural* hindrance in men, that gift would not avail any, unless the especial grace of God were also given. It was in this view he said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born *from above* he cannot *see* the kingdom of God."* And at another time he said, "No man can come to me, except the Father—*draw* him;" and in the end of the same chapter he repeats that saying, but changes the words to "except it were *given to him* of my Father."

The words of the Apostle in his Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. i. 9.) throw very full light upon the nature of the Lord's doctrine; for he states that men are saved, not according to their works (i.e. merits) but according to God's *own* purpose and grace, which *was given to them in Christ before the world began*.

In the foregoing expressions, whether of the Lord or of Paul, the doctrine of election is strongly affirmed. It is no less so throughout the Scriptures of the New Testament. Even where it is said, "By grace ye are saved," *that* affirms the same thing; and in adding the words "through faith" the utmost care is taken to express that *that also* is "*the gift of God*;" it is alike in consequence of election in Christ before the world began.

Election in Christ is therefore the basis of the Gospel plan of salvation, and it must be in *it* that we are to seek for the wisdom of God.

The idea conveyed under the word election, is simply that of choice—it implies nothing more than the selection of some person or thing, and that others, if there be others, are simply left *as they were*.

This definition of the true nature of the act of election, is fully justified by Romans ix. 7—24. The teaching of that passage may be summed up in two broad lines,—the first has respect to the elect; the second, to the non-elect.

Of the former class it is stated that the nature of election in respect to them is simply that of *compassion shewn*; and its principle is illustrated by the instances of Esau and Jacob, the one of whom had been chosen, and the other rejected, before either was born, or could, therefore, have done good or evil. To *justify* this there must have been, in the sight of God, an entire absence of *claim* upon him, in the essential condition of both the children. And the

* Note. The Greek word which has in John iii. 3, 7, been translated "*again*," is translated "*above*" in the 31st verse, "He that cometh from above." It is inconceivable what could have induced the use of "*again*," for it has no such meaning.

Scriptures state that to be the fact, in the essential condition of all men ; those *saved* were *equally*, with those who *fail* of salvation, "by nature, children of wrath." The 1st chapter, verses 26—29, of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, strongly corroborates this view, and bears with an overwhelming force against the presumption of original or intrinsic worth in the church.

Of the non-elect, that passage declares that as "vessels of wrath, fit only for destruction," the goodness of God, ought rather to be glorified, for bearing with them so long, than to be found fault with on the score that he permits them to go on in the way they have chosen for themselves. That is the nature of the action of God towards the non-elect ; namely the leaving of them to their *own* choice,* and its justice is based on the fact that they are righteously obnoxious to the wrath of God ; which was precisely the natural state of the elect also.

Thus the ground upon which election proceeds, and is justified, is that all men are by nature *exposed* to and *deserving* of the wrath of God, so that while it may please him, in the exercise of his sovereign will, graciously to shew mercy to some, they to whom it is not extended have no just reason to charge God, since themselves are righteously obnoxious to his anger.

Wherefore the essential character of election is simply that of *shewing mercy*. But the Scriptures have also said of the elect, that they were predestined to salvation ; that is but a repetition of the same *fact*, in other words. Yet it is here the perverse ingenuity of man has come in. He confounds the simple idea which is equally conveyed in both those words, with another idea which is not conveyed in them ; and he infers that the predestination to salvation of some, necessarily implies the predestination to damnation of others.

Predestination is therefore a doctrine which, in a supreme degree, excites the hatred of man.

Hatred of any principle, upon which the Creator has declared he does and will act, can proceed only from a secret belief that it is an *unjust* principle ; and this principle has been arraigned as wanting in the commonest idea of equity—that is *absolute impartiality*.

They who understand the Scriptures, and the nature of the power which is therein ascribed to Satan over the minds of men, will have no difficulty in believing that this hatred has been infused into their minds by him alone. He and the angels who are linked with him, stand in a position precisely analogous to that of men ; wherefore the conclusion is irresistible, that evil angels, no less than evil men, challenge and arraign the principle of God's action, by which, while some, both of angels and of men, have been kept by the almighty energy of the will of the Creator, others have been, both angels and men, abandoned to the path they chose for themselves.

* Note.—Without, in the least, receding from, or *apologizing* for, the assumption of the Creator's absolute right to do as he wills with his creatures, it is no less obvious that the instance of Pharaoh, in this chapter, and the expression "whom he wills he hardens," ought to be taken in connection with other explicit declarations bearing upon the same point. On the one hand it is written "God cannot be tempted with evil ; neither tempteth he any man ;" and on the other, the whole testimony of Scripture clearly ascribes to Satan's instigation, the evils which men are guilty of. The character of that action by which God is said to harden, must therefore be of that kind which abandons a man to the guidance of *him*, whose ways are preferred to those of God. In the presence of the distinct declaration, that he *wills not* that *any* should perish, and many others to the like import, it is *impossible* to conceive of God influencing his creatures to their eternal ruin.

Nothing can be more simply plain than that the *justice* of the act of election depends *entirely* upon the fact whether those who have departed from the will of God, are, or are not, *therefore*, in the actual position of *righteous* exposure to the anger of God. If men could but appreciate this *as a fact*, they would no longer cavil at the *principle* of election, but would each for himself, hasten to lay hold of the sole way of escape, which the mercy of God has provided for all, and strive to make their own calling and election sure. (2 Peter i. 10.) Let us therefore examine the ground upon which the righteous exposure to God's anger, of all who have departed from his will, is plainly to be inferred; and endeavour to learn in what respect the obedience of Christ has placed it beyond dispute.

If God *so* created the beings whom he has made, that it was not possible for them to have persevered in obedience, it may be justly said that he must have predestined them to whatever is the penalty of disobedience, and that he cannot *justly* visit with that penalty for a disobedience which was theirs by defect or necessity of creation.

But if on the other hand God did not *so* create them; if it was a possible thing to them to have persevered in obedience, it is self-evident God could not have predestined them to any penalty which might be attached to disobedience, because it was in their *own* power to have avoided that penalty; in which case exposure to the penalty would be at once the sole fault, and its infliction at the fixed period, the *rightful* expectation of the disobedient.

If the above be a very simple, it is not the less a sufficient and true statement of the case. It resolves the allegation of predestination to damnation, into the simple question whether there was or was not, in the beings who have fallen, a perfect ability, by creation, to have continued in obedience to the will of the Creator.

This has not been demonstrated by any of the angels; for the term "elect," which is applied in the Scriptures to the whole body of those who have continued in obedience, implies that they are indebted to the grace of God for that fact.*

Adam also disobeyed, and no one of those who have derived being from him alone, has ever, of his own power, evinced that it was possible for one created as he was, to have persevered against the power of evil.

We need not stop to inquire whether these circumstances would or would not warrant an antecedent presumption that God would vindicate his name from the possibility of doubt, on a point so affecting his glory, as that which could give even a shadow of belief that he had failed to create the beings he had made, with powers adequate to meet his demands upon them; we need not stop to do this, but pass on to consider the fact that he *has done so*.

In Christ God has fully met the challenge of evil angels and of evil men. In him, the former view one "made a little lower than the angels," who has always done those things which pleased God; and the mouth of the angels who have swerved from obedience is closed for ever—inasmuch as it was plainly possible for them to have done that which has been achieved by one, made a little lower than themselves.

And so, too, may men view in Christ, one born of a woman, "sent in the likeness of sinful flesh," who has maintained a perfect obedience to the will of

* Note.—In 1 Tim. v. 21. Paul strongly charges Timothy, by the Heavenly powers generally,—that is by the *entire* powers of heaven, and it is there that he refers to the entire body of the angels as elect.

God, though assailed by all that the powers of darkness could do against him. The mouth of man is therefore shut for ever, for he cannot, in face of such evidence to the contrary, affirm an original impossibility to fulfil the demands of the Creator.*

This gives us the key to the jealous care of God, in the Scriptures, to assert the *bonâ fide* humanity of Christ, in the words that he came in *the flesh*: and it should induce us, because of God's care about it, to attach the highest importance to the belief in the *bonâ fide* humanity of the Lord.

To deny the *bonâ fide* humanity of Christ, is to rob him of that which he has claimed upon the *basis of that fact*, namely, the having glorified God upon the earth. It is also to rob God the Father of the vindication of his name, which it was one of the chief objects of the incarnation of his Son to effect.

Before we enter upon a more particular examination of the consequences of the obedience of Christ in its result upon all created intelligences, let us look at two points which strengthen the view we have taken, that it was the *purpose* of God by the obedience of Christ to do that which we may see has been effected by that means.

The first arises from the circumstances attending the birth of the Saviour. It was given to the angels to announce the purposes of God in his son, in the words, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace," (Luke ii. 14.) Here we see *two* things attached to the circumstance of the birth of Christ as *man* (that is as the seed of the woman). First, glory to God; secondly, peace on earth. The conjunction "and," shews the two things are connected. They centred in Christ, by whom both were to be effected; they meet also in the believer who reaps the benefit both of the glory which his obedience brought to God, and of the peace to man. But the same word "and" shews they are also separate things; one *in addition* to the other. There is God's part *and* man's part; to God glory—to man, peace, and these were to result from the birth of Christ as man.

We find the counterpart of the former in the Lord's own words, "I have glorified thee upon the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me

* Note.—Some may find difficulty in understanding how the obedience of Christ can have any condemning power upon those who have fallen, because he, as God, could not have been in circumstances of possibility to fall.

To such it may be observed that "possibility to fall," is not the question; possibility to *obey* is the question. The question, too, respects beings *before* they had fallen. It is a question, of whether they were, or were not *created* in the possibility to obey: that is the point; wherefore, to bring in any question concerning "possibility to fall," is a mere shifting of the real ground, a blinking of the original question.

That original question is decided by another;—viz., *was* Christ placed in such circumstances upon the earth, as to have been at once a man, as Adam was, when he was created, and a little lower than the angels were, as they were created? The Scriptures assert the truth, the *bonâ fide* and *literal* truth, of both those facts; and also that he glorified God, by a perfect obedience, *while in that condition of being*. Wherefore, his obedience has evinced, what the disobedient ought to have done, and might have done, and hence the condemning power to them.

That it was not possible for Christ to fall, is an abstract truth which none can question. But to bring it into connection with his obedience as man, indicates a secret belief that divinity was *the power* by which he persevered. This is distinctly disavowed in the words of Phil. ii. 7, which declare that when he took upon him *the form of a servant*, he divested himself of the *form of God*. And this clearly intimates that divinity was not the power by which he persevered. (N. B.—The Greek word, which has been translated "made himself of no reputation,"—means "to divest oneself—to *empty* oneself.")

to do," and it was just before he uttered those words, when his work had been finished and he was about to be offered up, that Christ himself noticed its connection of condemnation upon the world and upon Satan. He did so in the words, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out," (John xii. 31.) and he refers again to the latter as a *thing done* (though it was fully accomplished only when he had risen from the dead) in John xvi. 11, "the prince of this world is judged." The counterpart of the latter portion of the angels' song is found in the words, "being justified by faith we have peace with God;" "He hath made peace through the blood of his cross."

Thus we see that to glorify God upon the earth, and to die for sinners, were two separate ends of the mission of Christ. The accomplishment of the first can be found in his character of the righteous servant *alone*. The second was fulfilled *only* upon the cross.

As God has seen fit to connect these two ends, we might be sure they are both equally and essentially necessary parts of the mission of Christ; and this leads to another important thought, namely:

That the gospel plan of salvation would be utterly incompatible with the glory of God *except upon the basis* of the obedience of one made, in very deed, both a little lower than the angels, and of the flesh and blood of man.

For let us suppose that the incarnation of Christ had contemplated *only* the providing of a sin offering. Surely the atonement would have sufficed to meet the holiness of God, for he himself has said, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" that is, there is in his blood an efficacy sufficient to cleanse the whole race of man even in God's sight; but what would have been the state of things had that been *all* which God had effected in sending his Son into the world?

A dispensation which provided only for the pardon of the fallen among *men*, if even it had embraced the *whole* of the fallen of the human race, would not have met the circumstances of the case; for the gospel plan of salvation has no aspect of hope or of pardon upon the myriads of angels who have also fallen.

Besides which, the gospel plan of salvation does *not* provide for the indiscriminate and necessary salvation even of all the fallen of the human race; the salvation of those among them who are saved, depends upon the electing mercy of God, wherefore a dispensation which provided only for the salvation of some, while others not more guilty, were left to themselves, would scarcely place the justice—that is, the impartiality of God in a clear point of view—because as (in the supposed dispensation) it would be unproven that there had been original ability to continue in obedience, *all* the fallen might appear to have an *equal claim* upon the mercy of God. Therefore such a dispensation as has been supposed, would in the estimation of the fallen, have afforded ground to impeach the glory of the Most High on two points.

1st. That no proof existed that either angels or man had been created with powers adequate to their continuance in obedience; wherefore the sovereign will by which the Creator had elected some, necessarily implied that he had predestined, even in the act of creation, the non-elect to fall, and to its penalty.

2nd. That the eternal punishment, whether of angels or of men, was an *unjust thing*, seeing that, for all that had been shown to the contrary, their

failure had arisen from an *irresistible power of evil*, which would manifestly seem to rest upon the creator who had permitted it.

We may, therefore, perceive the absolute necessity to the glory of God, that the gospel plan of salvation should have respect to his *own* glory as well as to the salvation of man. To vindicate the justice of God in the act by which he shows mercy to *some*, there was a *previous* and *absolute necessity* that the whole of the fallen should be stripped of all pretence to a *claim* upon him. It is *that* which the obedience of Christ has effected; it has placed all the fallen upon the common ground of *guilty before God*.

But if all are *guilty* before him it is obvious none can have any *claim* upon him. The *proper expectation of the guilty* can be only that which God has declared to be their expectation. He has said that the wages of sin is death; that refers to the *second death* alone, and intimates the eternal wrath of God to be the due reward of sin, even as wages are the due meed of work done. That is in the Scriptures declared to be the due of all men by nature; and none could justly complain if it fell upon all. Still less can any complain if the mercy of God should spare some; and it is in this way election comes in. It is the sovereign exercise of the mercy of God in Christ to some of the guilty. Of two equally guilty no injustice is done to the one by pardoning the other. But is there not *partiality*? There *can* be none—and it is to remove even the shadow of this ground of thought that pardon is equally offered to all the guilty; nay more, God has *commanded* all men every where to repent and believe the gospel, declaring it to be *his power* unto salvation unto every one that believes.

It is only when we perceive that the glory of God is in question as well as the salvation of man, that we can at all estimate the grandeur of the design of God in Christ. It is *then* only that we can appreciate the jealous care of the Scriptures to assert that Christ came in *the flesh*; for we see that it is only by admitting the literal truth of that fact, we can understand also the nature (in its condemnation upon the angels who have fallen) of the parallel assertion that he was made a little lower than the angels.

Finally, it is this alone that enables us to understand *why* the whole energies of Satan were bent against Christ's earthly course. He had appreciated the result of condemnation to himself, of the possible continuance in obedience of the first Adam, and full well did he appreciate the eternal consequences to him and to his fellows of the perseverance of the Second Adam. The *fact*—the *mere fact* of Satan's strenuous endeavours to hinder and overthrow Christ, is the fullest *virtual proof* that Satan, *at least*, had no sort of doubt that his perseverance would snatch from him every shadow of pretence whereby he has either justified himself or sought to arraign the justice of God. And what a testimony has Satan *himself* afforded to *the fact* that Christ was at once in the place of "a little lower than the angels," and truly man! that testimony arises out of his efforts to overthrow Christ, efforts which could not and would not have been made, had he not deemed him to have occupied that place.

The Scriptures present us with the assurance that Christ maintained a perfect and unswerving obedience to the will of God, and that he by that perfect obedience has *glorified God* upon the earth. We can never *hope* to approach to any thing like an appreciation of the *import of that fact*, in its bearing upon men, that is upon *all men*, excepting by an implicit reception of

it in its literal truth. If we permit ourselves to be misled into any thought which would resolve the obedience of Christ into a consequence of his *divinity*, we thereby virtually deny that he *has* glorified God; because *that* could only have been done by him as *man*. But we not only derogate from the glory of God which has accrued to him from the vindication of his name by the obedience of the *man* Christ, we also open the door to another evil, even that of *evading* in our own instance the effect upon us which God has designed should be produced by Christ's obedience as man. That designed effect is to place every man upon the ground of *guilty before God*; and who that believes the obedience of Christ was the consequence of the divinity and not of the humanity, of his nature, *can* see any effect of condemnation upon himself? Who that believes the perseverance of Christ was the result of "a divine spring of thought and feeling," can for a moment admit any parallelism of circumstances between Christ and himself? But to deny that parallelism is to deny that Christ came in the flesh! It is to deny that "He was tempted in all points like as we are;" and then the words which follow that declaration, viz., "*yet without sin*," instead of suggesting the condemnation in which *our* flesh necessarily stands by the contrast, are read so as at once to *account for* his perseverance through trials, and *excuse* our own faultiness under them.

The effect of the *bond fide* belief of the perfect obedience of Christ as man should be, *in the believer*, that of joy, that by *knowing that righteous servant he has been justified*. (Isaiah liii. 11.) *In the unbeliever* its perception should have the effect of driving him to seek by *faith*, that righteousness, which while he *cannot* attain to it by his own works, God will nevertheless *require* of him, if he will *not* accept of that which Christ has wrought out.

Before going into the consideration of the manner in which the wisdom of God is so singularly and especially shewn in election, it may be well to clear up a matter which may have seemed to have been somewhat confounded in the preceding remarks. It may appear to some that a distinct line of reasoning should have been adopted in respect of Adam, who was created "perfect," and those descended from him, who, by his means alone, have been made sinners. But the Scriptures do not authorise any such distinction. All men are involved in a common liability to the wrath of God—a liability which results from the fact that they have derived the *evil principle* from Adam; an evil principle which places them by natural birth in a position of heart-alienation *from* and enmity to God.

While, therefore, none who have derived life from Adam alone have ever been in a position to do what Adam might have done, neither can it be said that God is requiring of them a perfect obedience which they *cannot* render. On the contrary, he has expressly declared, that "by the deeds of the law" (that is by a man's own righteousness) *no flesh* shall be justified in his sight." But he has also set forth *Christ* as "*the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes*." "By faith in him men are justified from *all things* from which they could not have been justified by the law of Moses."

In direct connection with this truth, God has also declared that he has fixed a day in which he *will* judge the secrets of all hearts by the Man whom he hath appointed. In that great and terrible day those *only* will be judged by *their works*, who *themselves prefer* to stand on that ground before God. All who reject the way of escape which the mercy of God has provided in Christ *against that day*, having themselves rejected escape by *faith*, *must* (so God

has willed it) answer to him for that obedience which the Creator has an infeasible right to expect from his creatures. It is *then* the obedience of *the Man* who will be their judge, will be found to place in speechless confusion all those who will not *now* have him to reign over them.

But it is said "how can I believe, unless one of those predestined to life?" To this the reply is—to God alone is known who *is* predestined: "secret things belong to *God*, but those which are *revealed*, to us." (Deut. xxix. 29.) But he has, in the most explicit words said, "He is not willing that *any* should perish;" and in yet more positive terms, "He will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." To this he has added his *command*, "God now commandeth all men every where to repent, (turn to him)* *BECAUSE* he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world." He has said further, "All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" and *that Lord* has, with pointed reference to that declaration said, "Him that cometh to me I will in *nowise* cast out." What words can more effectually convey the desire that *all* should be saved? Yet it is more than desire, since he, the Almighty, *beseeches* sinners to be reconciled to him. That is the language of the Gospels. "We are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you *BY US*, we pray you, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20, 21.)

That is what is revealed and belongs to man; and not that, which being secret, can belong to God alone.

All excuses (in the face of such declarations) whereby men suffer themselves to evade a compliance with the Gospel call, will be found based in an entire absence of *will* to do so, as the Lord said to the Jews, "Ye *will* not come to me that ye might have life," and the cause of that unwillingness will be found one and the same in all men, viz., the preference of things seen, to those unseen—a love of darkness rather than light—the fear lest they may be subjected to restraints to which they desire not to be subjected.

But one thing is evident, viz.: that salvation from the wrath to come, is freely offered to all men, and together with it, an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ. Wherefore the rejecting those offers is purely the fault of those who reject them. It cannot be chargeable upon God, since he wills, beseeches, and commands every one to believe and be saved.

And it is this very consideration that enables us to appreciate the wisdom of God in election. The wisdom of a means is measured by its fitness of adap-

* A great deal of evil has resulted from misunderstanding the meaning of the word "*repentance*." It has been almost universally thought to enjoin *only sorrow for sin*, and men feel they have *no* such sorrow, and do not see how to originate it. But the Scriptures authorise *another* interpretation of that expression. In one place, indeed, it is placed in a distinct point of view, as differing from sorrow—"Godly sorrow," the Apostle says, "*worketh repentance unto life*." That is sorrow is but the means of *turning* a man to life. The word everywhere translated "to repent," or "repentance," signifies also *turning from* one course of action *to another*. So when the Jews asked John (Luke iii. 8—14) to describe the fruits of repentance, ("What shall we do then?") he clearly indicates the nature of repentance to be *the desisting from evil and adoption of good*, and therein agrees with Ezekiel xviii. 27. "When the wicked man *turneth from* the wickedness he hath committed," &c. Under the Gospel, repentance signifies "turning to God in the way of his appointment," by faith in Christ, who is that *way*. It is not meant that sorrow for sin is not an *element* of repentance, but that the latter word has a much wider meaning than mere sorrow.

tation to the end in view. If the means adopted be the sole means to the end, then is the wisdom of that means perfect, in the fullest sense of that word.

We see in the excuses and subtleties by which so vast a majority of men evade the Gospel call, what would have been the excuses and subtleties of *all*. Every man is by nature a lover of darkness rather than light. Left to his *own choice* no man would ever have been saved. But God has a purpose to save some for his own mercy's sake, and he has found in election the sole means of attaining that end. Election is an act of sovereign grace, showing mercy to some of the guilty. That the like escape was freely proffered to all, must and will close the lips of those who neglect so great salvation. And shall they complain that those who are saved were not left to perish as well as themselves? That will be the true nature of their complaint; unreasonable and unjust, for God, in the great day when he will judge the secrets of all hearts, will be found to have equally offered the same salvation to all who have so much as heard of it, and that they themselves have, by neglecting, put it from them.

III.

PURPOSE OF GOD IN THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST,

IN THEIR ESPECIAL VINDICATION OF THE GLORY OF GOD, AND IN THEIR
LEAVING ALL MEN WITHOUT EXCUSE BEFORE HIM.

No one who reads the Gospels with any degree of attention, can fail to be struck with the fact, that Christ is therein represented to have encountered continual obstruction, while in the course of his mission upon earth; that is, while engaged in proclaiming that Gospel, which he was anointed to preach to the poor. One cannot fail to observe that it is stated as a fact, that Christ did meet with much *personal* opposition; *personal insult*; many attempts to take his life; in short, that he did encounter circumstances which, in the case of any *other* person, would be unhesitatingly called *sufferings*, in the course of an appointed or self-imposed work, (as the case might be.)

To one who knows any thing of the attributes of the Almighty God; who is able to understand that it is plainly *impossible* that anything can happen without him; and that if this be true of every man's sufferings, it must, in an especial manner, be true of those of one occupying so exceedingly exalted a relation to God as Christ held, the inference would be irresistible, that the sufferings of Christ, of what kind soever, *must* needs have been by the permission of God.

But when such an one read, in a part of the Word of God, written after those sufferings had been brought to a termination, but with distinct reference to them, that "it *became* God, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect *through* sufferings," he would no longer hesitate to ascribe, not merely the permission, but the appointment of those sufferings,

to the express will of God,—such an one would argue that, since the Word of God declares that it “*became*” him to do so, there was doubtless some purpose of his to be answered in the sufferings of Christ, which, in *God’s wisdom*, could not be attained *without* them; that doubtless, those sufferings were *deemed by God*, necessary, in some way, to his glory; that those sufferings would, in some way, more redound to the glory of God, than, in *his judgment*, would have been attained by the absence of those sufferings.

When the enquirer whom I have supposed, saw it written, in a third place, of Christ, “though he were a son, yet learned he *obedience by the things which he suffered*,” he would at once conceive that God designed that Christ should present an example of obedience to him, *through* sufferings: that God purposed to evince by Christ, that it was possible to continue in unshaken obedience, in *despite* of sufferings, and he would conclude that the obedience of Christ, through sufferings unto death, did in some way, in God’s judgment, conduce to his glory.

It would not require any very high order of intellect, to come to such a conclusion as that; and there would remain only that the enquirer should endeavour to learn in *what way* the sufferings of Christ, as man, could conduce to the glory of God. Let us attempt to do this.

The glory of God, being infinite and essential, it is evident it cannot really be added to, or diminished by any possible circumstances. In itself *infinite*, what *can* add to it? *Essential*, what *can* tarnish it? When, therefore, we speak of any thing as conducing to the glory of God, it is plain that we must ascribe to it, that it vindicates that glory; that it makes that which is indeed essential to *appear* in all its essential beauty. And the very words of God that it became him to do so and so, imply that he has seen necessity to vindicate his glory. They imply that some circumstances do exist, which seem to call that glory into question; which existing circumstances have appeared to God, in his infinite wisdom, to necessitate him to place his glory in its essential point of view. It follows, from this, that God is acting with reference to some, who either have already, or may at some future period, set up a question of his glory; and that the sufferings, the obedience of Christ through sufferings does now, or will at that future period, vindicate the glory of God in some way.

This idea supposes that there is some period or time, in which the glory of God is to be vindicated; or rather, in which the manifestation of its vindication shall be made. For if God has been acting in the sufferings of Christ, with reference to his own glory, it follows that there is some period or time when this will be seen to have been the object aimed at by him; when that is, the sufferings of Christ will be *felt* to have vindicated the glory of God.

What, then, is that period? The Scriptures tell us of it. They declare that the years which now run so rapidly on, do but progress towards an appointed period, when *time itself* shall be no more. (Rev. x. 5, 6.) They declare that God has appointed a DAY, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the *man* whom he hath ordained. (Acts xvii. 30, 31.)

What being can imagine the terrific interest,—what heart can weigh the awful importance of that day? It is a day which will consign unnumbered millions of human beings, and myriads of fallen angels, FOR EVER, to insupportable torments!

Men may avoid the consideration of it *now*, but it will not cease to be true,

for that; nor will it cease to be of awful importance because their ears are now closed, or their eyes averted from its terrors. On the contrary, it does but add to the fearfulness of that day, that *now*, those who *must* meet it,—who cannot, by possibility *avoid* its coming, will, notwithstanding, turn away from its consideration; preferring to go blindly on to utter and irremediable destruction, rather than endure the *present* pain of reflecting that God has said it *shall* come, and so laying hold of the *escape* he has set before them.

That day is an “*appointed*” day, it is already fixed. How plain, then, that every hour brings it nearer! That day is the *end* which God has always had in view, even from the creation of man; an end which progresses continually to its fulfilment, as the slow march of the hand does over the face of the dial. Unheeded, it may be, but striking with all the more startling precision, that its progress was unheeded.

The great day of judgment is that time in which the glory of God is to be fully and *finally* (the mystery of God will be *finished*, Rev. x. 7.) vindicated, in the face and in the persons of all the beings whom he has created. It is that day which will for ever solve and set at rest the problem which has exercised the ingenuity of men, perversely seeking their own, and rejecting God’s explanation of it,—“the existence of evil.” Why it has been permitted. In what way its existence consists with the goodness of God. How with his wisdom: how with his justice. That day will solve and set at rest for ever.

One who knows anything of the revealed character of God needs no assurance that that day will indeed present a vindication of his glory, in all his attributes, which will leave all who have questioned it, in speechless confusion. Opposers will be so utterly overwhelmed by *their own* perfect conviction of the righteousness of God, that it will not need a word from him. Their own souls will do for them, in that day, that which they would not fail to do for them *now*, if they would but consider what God is saying to them by his Scriptures. *Now* he is saying to every soul of man, “*Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*” But *then* he will say, “*Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.*” (Prov. i. 23—26.) How terrible do these words make the *present state* of man seem!

Who is there, even among those to whom the goodness of God has assigned an even *more* than competent share of this world’s bliss, who, at one time or other does not find occasion to agree, in his very heart, with the wise man of old, “All is vanity and vexation of spirit?”

Who can look abroad upon the general circumstances in which men are found, without coming to the conclusion, that *evil*,—whether in the shape of poverty, disease, or of sorrow,—so far predominates over *good*, that it may be truly said that, upon the whole, man is an object of infinite compassion.

But one who knows, by the light of revelation, that such as man is, he has, nevertheless, in him the principle of never-ending life; a principle which will, by-and-bye, fix him *FOR EVER* in circumstances of inconceivable bliss or of unutterable woe; yet that he has also co-existing in him a principle of evil, a fretting leprosy, which ever breaks out in works of sin, even as a troubled

sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, (Isaiah lvii, 20) can scarcely fail to own that man's present state is, indeed, most deplorable! the more so, that both experience and the word of God conspire to shew, that the very circumstances of that present state—even the opposite ones of worldly ease and of worldly suffering, are used by men so as to bar their own pursuit of eternal things! (Jer. v. 4, 5.)

But the ever blessed and most merciful God—whose name is LOVE—does he not know, has he not compassionated the state in which his creatures are found? Let the words of his own Son answer that. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten son, that *whosoever* believeth in him, should *not perish*, but have everlasting life."

But while men have come to a perception of their own deplorable state, while we find it deeply rooted in the secret heart of every one, when he turns towards God and gets, as it were, but a glimpse of him, that man is indeed, before God, an object of exceeding compassion,—while this is so, how do we find it *work*? Does it induce man to seek God in *his way*?—Or does it not rather serve to gender and foster in him the hope that God will *after all* deal *leniently* with him because of that state? It is even so! There is in the secret heart of every man who will not seek God in *his way*, a hope that God will not deal so hardly with him as the Scriptures seem to threaten,—and it is this thought which renders so acceptable the doctrine of the non-eternity of future punishment.

But men do not stop there—that is indeed a stay—a comfort—that after all, *at the worst*, a merciful God will not punish *eternally*. But in very many minds there is found to exist a hope far higher than *that*. It cannot have escaped the observation of those much acquainted with men, that they do indulge in a sort of reasoning; that they cling to it as an encouraging hope, that God has permitted the various distinctions of the present life to exist, only because he does intend, in *another*, to ameliorate the condition of those whose lot, here below, has been indeed but one of misery and privation. This position has been distinctly taken by writers of ability. They have said that the permitting of such inequalities as are seen among men in the present life, can be scarce reconciled with the idea of the goodness of God, but by the supposition that he does intend to deal differently with them in the future state. This thought has, for its basis, an inference that man has some sort of claim upon God, as his Creator, which if not satisfied now, will certainly be so in the next world. If this has been thought and written, by men of education and reflection, is it not cherished by the uneducated and ignorant? By those whose *actual state* of misery almost naturally inclines them to hope for better things in the world to come? It is even so. It is scarcely possible to converse with the unconverted in the lower walks of life, without perceiving that there does (where the subject has been thought upon at all) exist a hope that God will *then* make amends to the man for his sufferings in this life; that privations and poverty here below, are relied upon as giving a sort of rightful expectation, or claim, upon the consideration of God. This thought lies at the root of the doctrine of *universalism*; * that is, that all men will be finally

* Note.—The hopes of Universalism are thus expressed by Mr. Tennyson :—

"Oh yet we trust that *somehow* good,
Will be the final goal of ill,

saved, whether they believe in Christ or not. But while the man does this, he leaves God out of question. He is looked to, indeed as one upon whom man has a claim;—but what of the question whether God may have a claim upon *the man*! This will be found always left out of the account. And it cannot be otherwise; for who, that considers present suffering in the light of “claim upon God,” can be expected to consider for a moment, whether there *can be* such a question as the doing of the will of God, in *despite* of sufferings? Whether God, that is, may or may not have an entire *claim* to the full and perfect obedience of those whom he has created; a claim which no state of suffering can set aside? It will be invariably found, that, where a supposed claim to the consideration of God, exists, the state of suffering which constitutes that claim, will also be found to exonerate the sufferer (in his own mind) from all thoughts of owing anything to God.

But in the case of mankind, those very circumstances of privation and suffering, of what kind soever, under which men labour, were *by the appointment of God himself*! It was *he* who laid upon Adam the sentence of sorrow, labour and death; and all the varied miseries under which men labour, are but modified forms of that sentence; they all spring out of it. Can there be any doubt then, that hopes which are cherished *here*, that these extenuate disobedience; that even some claim to mercy may be hoped for, from the sufferings under which the disobedient do notoriously labour now, would not *then* be urged, when the great day comes which will agonize all hearts of the disobedient? Would it not be said in that day, even to God himself, “*Thou* didst lay upon us those things. *We* had not offended, but through the fault of another, in which we had no part; to which we gave no consent, all those evils came upon us, and they were more than it was possible for us to contend against! *We* had enough to do to care for ourselves; to walk under the pressure of those distresses which *thou* didst lay upon us; it was *not possible* for us to give our thoughts to thee.”

If we could but picture to ourselves a little of the horror of that great and dreadful day, we should feel that what is written above, so far from being overcharged, falls infinitely short of what the hearts of the desperate can devise, and *would have* devised against God. But, has not an all-wise God foreseen that? Will that which he has declared to be true *now*, cease to be true *then*? Has he not said of the world *now*, that every mouth *is* stopped, and all the world *guilty before God*? (Rom. iii. 19.) And will that cease to be a *fact then*? Those words convey the idea of a state of entire *self*-condemnation; that none will *have* one word to offer. But how could that *be*, if no *man* had ever evinced that obedience was *possible*, and had been effected, even through suffering?

It is thus we may see, that but for the obedience *through sufferings*, of Christ, the glory of God would have been *in question*, on that day; and this

To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That *not one life shall be destroyed*,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God has made the pile complete.”

That is “*a trust*” without one shadow of foundation in Scripture—it supposes that all the declarations of God, respecting sin and sinners, shall prove *void* and of none effect whatever!

enables us to understand *how* it was *necessary to the glory of God*, that in the day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, every heart should *feel* that none of those circumstances which *he had laid upon man*, had necessitated man's continuance in disobedience: that even all the sufferings and miseries arising out of God's sentence, had in no way conduced to the destruction of those who shall perish; nor could therefore be accepted as in any way extenuating or palliating disobedience.*

But for the obedience *through sufferings*, of Christ, *as man*, the glory of God would not have been *so* vindicated in the day in which he will judge the world, as to leave every soul *without excuse* before him. But his obedience through sufferings, has done so *now*, and will do so in that day. He who will judge the world, will need only to present *HIMSELF* to the disobedient, and that will be enough. They will *see*, in their Judge, one, *ONCE* a man like themselves, who did always those things that pleased God. Who did so in spite of the accumulation upon him, of all that the devil or man could devise and execute! In spite of opposition, mockery, attempts to take his life, ignominy, spitting and scourging! In spite of a cruel death; of the passing away of his soul in the midst of jeers and scorn, he was able to persevere in unshaken obedience to God.

What reply can there be to that? Who can have the hardihood to hope from his sufferings a claim to consideration, *to glory*; seeing that the example of Christ shews they are no excuse for disobedience!

We may here see another reason for the jealous care evinced in the Scriptures to assert that Christ came in *the flesh*. That is, that he did indeed partake of the flesh and blood of which man is a partaker, because the vindication of the name of God from the thought that the eternal ruin of those who perish has been in any shape attributable to his sentence, *depends entirely* upon the fact of the *bonâ fide* humanity, and *bonâ fide* sufferings of Christ. To deny the real *humanity* is to throw to the winds all the argument from *sufferings*, for they must have been *unreal too*.

It is scarcely possible to avoid seeing, that the design of God has been to place his Son in *all* the circumstances—*sin alone* excepted—in which man was found; in order that he might, in the day of judgment, furnish in him, an overwhelming reply, which shall stop the mouths of all men, and make all creation guilty before him.

It is only when we are able to perceive the importance of the sufferings of Christ as man, in connection with the day of judgment; when we understand that the glory of God will then be vindicated by the *fact* of his obedience *through sufferings*, that we can feel the exceeding importance of weighing well every word which may, by possibility, seem to detract from or lessen the value of the sufferings of Christ, as man.

As regards the fallen angels, the argument from the continuance in obedience of Christ, through sufferings, is damning in the highest degree. It is so because they knew not of sufferings before they fell. We have not the least

* Note.—What if, on the contrary, a state of suffering *now* shall be found to *enhance* the sufferer's condemnation! What if sufferings are the voice of God, speaking to man, to *remind* him (*without avail*) of God, of life, of death! This will be touched upon hereafter: but it is suggested that the value of such thought is seen by reflecting that it is only when a man feels *every hope*, *in himself*, stripped from him, that he will close heartily with the mercy of God in Christ.

ground to say they did ; but rather the entire analogy of God's dealings with his creatures, quite *forbids* the thought that he would permit suffering to any but as a consequence of disobedience.

And with respect to man, the same argument will bear with an overwhelming power of condemnation upon them. The mouth of man is *stopped*. None can hope to justify or *palliate* his continuance in disobedience in the face of one who *has* evinced the possibility of persevering in obedience through circumstances infinitely more trying than ever fell to the lot of any of themselves.

It has been said that it was the design—that is, the *express purpose*, of God, to place his Son in *all* the circumstances in which man is found. Let us endeavour to ascertain in what manner this is seen.

1st. Christ *was* found in this circumstance of Adam *before* he fell ; namely, that he too was subjected to the temptations of Satan, as Adam had been.

In three of the Gospels we have the record of Christ's temptation by the Devil. In two of them it is stated, "He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness ;" in one of them, that he was *driven* by the Spirit there. In one of the Gospels the *purpose* for which he was led into the wilderness is also stated, "to be tempted of the Devil." We are, then, expressly taught, that it was by the agency of the Holy Ghost himself that Christ was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

He was led into the wilderness ! How different from the circumstances of the first Adam ! God had placed *him* in the garden of Eden, where was every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. (Gen. ii. 8, 9.) Our first parents had therefore *no want* to plead in extenuation of their yielding to the tempter's voice. But Jesus was led into the wilderness, where there was *nothing* good for food : and after he had fasted forty days, he was *an hungered*. Here were circumstances infinitely more favourable to Satan ; and he was not slow to seize upon them. "*If thou be the Son of God !*" said he, "command these stones to be made bread." We may observe here the close resemblance of the *spirit* of this speech to that in which he had accosted Eve. "*Yea hath God said !*"—" *If thou be !*"—they have both the same character of *doubtful insinuation*. *Insinuation* is ever *calculated* to *infuse* doubt—with *man* it almost always succeeds in stirring up pride, and eliciting a course of *independent* action : it succeeded with Eve.

But we cannot suppose that Satan had, *himself*, any manner of doubt that Christ was indeed the Holy One of God. We cannot tell *what* his ideas were as to the double nature of the being who stood before him ; but it is evident, from the facts, that Satan did see in Christ all that resembled the man whom he had originally made to fall. We cannot doubt this, or he would have scarce *attempted* to deceive and to seduce him, whereas he did make *both* attempts. The *nature* of the temptations, too, which were presented by Satan, clearly shews that *He* believed he saw a man before him : they were such as are plainly calculated to overcome the constancy of such a being as man, and *only* of such a being as man. What an argument of the perfect humanity of Christ—a testimony wrong even from Satan himself !

We may also remark the difference in our Lord's mode of meeting temptation. Eve listened at once to the tempter's voice, and Adam followed her. Neither of them appear to have once thought of God's command, "Thou shalt not eat of it." But the second Adam met each successive temptation by

instant reference to the *Word* of God, "*It is written.*" That is the expression of a faithful *servant*.

Thus we see Jesus was placed, and placed *by God*, in a position similar to, but under circumstances infinitely more trying than, those of the first Adam.

2ndly. It was the purpose of God, to place his son in those circumstances of Adam (and therefore of man)—sin *alone* excepted—after he had fallen. The sentence of God upon Adam for disobedience, may be summed up in the words sorrow, labour, and death of the body.

Under the general head of sorrow, we are doubtless to range all the sufferings to which man is liable. *Labour* is but another word for humiliation. It is an indication of an humble state. The pride, even of fallen man, looks *down* upon those who are necessitated to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. Such a condition is called, and it is, an humble state of being. These three then are the circumstances which God laid upon Adam, because of his disobedience. That is sorrow, and all that is comprised in it. Labour indicating circumstances of humiliation : and the death of the body. From Adam these three circumstances have passed upon all men.

If we now read the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, wherein Christ is especially fore-shewn as the *righteous servant** (ver. 11), the one by knowledge of whom many should be justified, we find it foretold of him, 1st. That he should be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; that he should be oppressed and afflicted. 2ndly, That he should be despised and rejected of men—despised and *not* esteemed. 3rdly, That he should taste of the death of the body. "He was cut off from the land of the living." "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death."

It is in this prophecy therefore distinctly affirmed, that Christ should come in all those three circumstances which God had laid upon man—namely sorrow, humiliation, and death.

And if we turn to the Gospels we do find that Christ is therein expressly represented as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. That he *was* despised and rejected of men ; that he *was* afflicted and oppressed. That the full place of humiliation was taken by him, is seen from two facts, 1st. That he had no where to lay his head. 2nd. That he was subsisted by the charity of others. If there be one place lower than another in the estimation of men, it is that of one indebted to others for his daily bread ; and into this place did it please the Father, that his Son should come ! Lastly, we read in the Gospels, that Christ did taste of death from the hand of the Jews upon the cross, when he poured out his soul unto death.

It can scarcely need to be said, that in averring that Christ came, or was found, in all the circumstances of man, this is spoken *generally*, that he did partake of *the* three circumstances which God did lay upon man.

Let us now consider how these three circumstances, in which it may appear to some that Christ did but share them, in common with man, were in His instance, of a character to entitle him to say with entire truth, "No sorrow is like unto my sorrow." There is a line of thought which may serve to point out in *what* way the position of Christ under sufferings was so much more trying than that of men in general, that his perseverance in obedience through

* Note.—He is also therein represented as the sin-offering : but that is a point which is not controverted, and therefore not touched upon.

them has not only vindicated the glory of God from the thought that he has added difficulties to men, in the sentence which he passed upon them, but has quite deprived men of all shelter from the hope that their lesser endurances can form ground to the consideration of God.

An attentive consideration of the circumstances of the fall, will not fail to enable one to observe, that *before* the sentence of sorrow, labour, and death, was passed upon Adam, he had already received a marked deterioration of mind. It is evinced in the deliberate *lie* which he uttered before God. He says, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid *because* I was naked, and I hid myself." Now we know that God had said to him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Is it possible to believe that those words were not ringing in his ears, and that it was *because* he had disobeyed God, and was afraid of death that he hid himself; and *not* because he was naked? Surely that was Adam's fear, and he told a deliberate lie in the words which he used to God. A lie, to us who are so used to hearing and seeing falsehood, may seem but a small thing. But not so before God. Whom has *he* said to be the *father* of lies? Adam had, therefore, passed from the region of fellowship with God who is light, into that of fellowship with the Devil, who is "a liar and the father of it," and is *darkness*. But the lie of Adam was only a *token*; it was only the *single* plague spot; but it was a true indication of the depth and virulence of the disease which had entered the heart and deteriorated the mind of him who had been created *perfect*. Adam's moral sensibilities were thenceforth blunted, and he was the better able to bear all that was comprised in the sentence afterwards laid upon him.

The truth of the principle that deterioration of mind does blunt the painfulness of shame and poignancy of suffering cannot be denied.

We know that in exact proportion to the degree of purity in any mind, is practical impurity shrunk from as something painful and even terrible. And where, on the other hand, practical impurity has been indulged in, it gradually deadens the moral sensibilities, so that the utmost excess of vileness is not only looked upon without pain but with positive approbation. (Rom. i. 24—32.) So in proportion as the sense of honour is felt, dishonour or even the breath of dishonour will break down and overwhelm the heart; causing even fallen men to prefer death to life: and where, on the other hand, the feelings of honour have been suffered to die, a man can suffer disgrace, not merely without shame, but with contempt even, of that which would be misery and death to another.

This line of thought is only suggested as one whose truthfulness a very little reflection will suffice to show. As a general principle, it amounts to this, that according to the greater or lesser degree of the existence of moral sensibility, even in fallen man, is suffering an evil or barely a name. The beast of the field suffers pangs as great as man suffers; he too, has death in common with man. Whence then does it arise that, by the one, pain, if it does not utterly disable, seems to be scarcely heeded, while in the other, it often lashes to madness or sinks to grovelling despair? To the existence of mind alone it is to be referred. To the absence of mind in the one, to its presence in the other. It is the mind alone which enables man to appreciate sufferings—and it aggravates those sufferings by its own suggestions.

To the degree of perfectness of this appreciation, that is, according to the

degree in which moral sensibility exists in the man, is suffering a greater or a lesser evil; the suffering is measured by the mind of him who suffers. The mind may therefore be said to be the true seat of suffering—for even where it is not literally so, it is that which gives to suffering its sting; and which is often seen to goad the sufferer to self-destruction, rather than continue under mere bodily pain.

The Scriptures of truth present one continued testimony to the existence of this deterioration of mind, as being part and parcel of fallen man. It is variously described; oftenest under the name of blindness or hardness of heart. It is strongly affirmed in Ephesians iv. 17—19. The natural man is there spoken of as “having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, who being *past feeling*, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;” and this their state, is accounted for in Romans i. 28, in the words “even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God *gave them over to a reprobate mind.*”

A very important line of inference arises out of this thought—namely, that appreciation of a state of sin, or of the circumstances of those who are in a state of sin, so far from inferring that the appreciator must himself feel the emotions of sin, infers quite the contrary. One who feels the emotions of sin is already *on the side* of sin. Sin which works in the members, brings also into *captivity* (Rom. vii. 23), and such a one is *necessarily* incapacitated from appreciating sin, *as sin*. The *hatefulness* of sin *cannot* be rightly estimated by one who is already *won* by its emotions—who is a *lover* of darkness (as man is, *by nature*, said to be.) The perception of sin, in its vileness, is necessarily blunted and blinded, in one whose very flesh has in it the principle of sin.

He *alone* can appreciate sin, and the terrible circumstances of those who are under sin, who is separate and apart from sin, whose moral sensibilities are like *light*, which exposes, without mingling with, or having anything in common with, *darkness*—whose mind and body are alike untainted by sin or its emotions. To appreciate sin, as God does, one must be as God. He knows what sin is because He sees it in all its defilement and horrible deformity. He is *light*, and can therefore know what darkness is, by its contrast with Himself—and He alone who is in that position, can appreciate sin in all its defilement and horrible deformity. (It is concerning this word “appreciation” that “Plymouth Brethren” have “striven to *no profit*” but *certainly* “to the subversion of their hearers.”)*

If it be true that according to the greater or less degree of perfectness of the moral sensibilities, even in fallen man, is suffering an evil, or barely a name—if it be true that in proportion to the purity of the mind is impurity painful and terrible—if it be true that according to the degree in which

* Note.—Strange to say, one of the Brethren, the strongest opposer of the idea that Christ *could* appreciate the sinful state of man *without* being Himself subject to the emotions of sin, has based his conviction upon a principle which *itself* refutes that conviction! He writes “In a word, it is *not* the being Himself in the state with which he sympathises, which gives the sympathy.” If so the necessary inference is that Christ *could* sympathize with sinful man *without* being in a state of sin. But this writer reverses all that—and seems indeed to perceive true principles only to turn them upside down. The quotation is from Mr. Darby’s “Remarks,” page 22.

a sense of honour exists, dishonour or disgrace are overwhelming to the heart, even of fallen man, what must have been the pressure of these upon Him (as He could see them) in whom was sublimated more than we can even conceive of moral perfectness? That sublimation is conveyed to us in the words "He was LIGHT;" it supposes a purity infinite and essential; an exquisite sensibility both to purity and impurity—to good and evil. To purity and good as of its own—to impurity and evil as contrary to, and abhorrent to, its own.

On the other hand God has said of those under sin, that they are *darkness*. There was, therefore, essential opposedness of character between Christ and men—but it was not merely the negative opposedness of light and darkness—not that of contrast only, for the darkness is that of sin, which is an active principle. It hates the light. It hated Him who was the light; as He said "they have hated me without a cause."

If therefore we would desire to form an idea of the trying nature of the position of Christ as light amidst darkness; as the Holy one among sinners; we must conceive what was due to Him personally. How exquisitely could He discern that! How poignantly feel that which He did encounter from the hands of sinners. We must remember that the world was made by Him—but refused to know the Creator. It is only when we keep our eye fixed upon Christ as essentially holy, just, and good, as, in Himself, the personification of love, that we can at all estimate the opposition, contempt, buffetings, spittings, scourging and dishonour, done to Him as in our own eyes *terrible in unrighteousness*; but if so *in ours*, what must they have been in His!

Hope and fear are the two mighty engines by which Satan is able to retain men in disobedience; to cheat them into eternal ruin. He presents good, in some form of selfish gratification, suited to the mind of him on whom he practises to deceive, and by it blinds the eyes, or at least averts them from the consequences. But if that fails, he then brings the pressure of distress and privation, and makes them appear to sanction, or at least extenuate evil—and he thus blunts the conscience, and lures to destruction. In both ways he succeeds with men.

It was therefore needful that Christ should be tried in both those ways, and He was so. By the offer of the whole world, Satan tried to seduce Him, and when that failed, he brought the pressure of sorrow and trial, in all those ways which he finds so irresistibly overwhelming to men in general. The sole purpose of Satan was to shake Him by affliction; so powerful an engine for evil does he esteem it. In both ways he failed; and Christ's perseverance in obedience through all that the devil or man could work against Him, has evinced that it was possible for one in the circumstances of man, who could appreciate the pressure of those circumstances in an infinitely greater degree than man can do—to persevere, notwithstanding that pressure, in unshaken obedience to God.

It is needless to advert to particular instances of the sufferings of Christ. They are recorded in the Gospels, and in considering them we must look, not only at the things endured, but at Him who endured them. We must carry along with us, in continued power of thought, not only that He was man—in all the perfection in which man had been created, but also that He was the MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the PRINCE OF PEACE, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS—FEARFUL IN PRAISES—THE CREATOR of everything that was made.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

WHEN Christ was upon the earth, and known to the Jews as the “carpenter’s son,” whose mother, brethren, and sisters were amongst them, (Matt. xiii. 55, 56) *they* had no kind of doubt that he was both a man and an Israelite. On the contrary, it was his claiming to be *more* than these which excited their anger; as they said to him, “For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, *being a man*, makest thyself God.” (John x. 33.)

It has been reserved to the Plymouth Brethren to adopt certain dogmas concerning the condition and circumstances of man, and concerning the position of the Jews when Christ came, which, (if they were founded upon fact) would render it impossible he could have been either a man or an Israelite. They have thus, under the pretence of shielding “the Lord” *from dishonour*, done their utmost to establish two unavoidable inferences; both dishonouring to God in the highest degree. The first of these is that the Scripture declarations on the subject of Christ’s humanity, *cover a mere fiction*: the second, which necessarily follows from the first, that the claim of Christ, to have glorified God upon the earth, has no foundation in *fact*.

That there should appear so late in the day of the present dispensation, the revival of a subtle form of doctrine which showed itself but to vanish again in the earliest ages of the church, will surprise no one who has remarked the Scripture affirmation that it is this *very form of heresy* which is by-and-bye to envelope the world. It is written of the denial that Christ came in the flesh, “*this is that spirit of Antichrist*”—meaning, that *this* will be the very declaration of Antichrist, who will (and indeed *must*) base his claim to reception upon the ground that before *he* came, God had not been manifest in the flesh: and we are thus enabled to see a new cause for the exceeding earnestness with which the Scriptures reiterate the assurance that Christ has indeed *come* in the flesh: it is the merciful design and desire of God to shield men from looking for *another*: and that can be effectually met only by the firm persuasion that Christ has *already* come in the flesh.

He who understands the absolute necessity to the glory of God of the *bond fide* humanity of Christ: who perceives in what respect his obedience as man has vindicated the name of God; and who appreciates *the bearing* of that fact upon mankind; in that he has furnished a standard of righteousness, whose counterpart must be *also* furnished by all who decline justification *by faith*—failing which they will perish eternally—will also be able to appreciate the infinite dishonour to God and to Christ, and the infinite mischief to the souls of men, of every form of subtlety by which the literal fact of Christ’s humanity

is invalidated, and its consequences both toward God and man brought to nought.

The Plymouth Brethren appear to have been unanimous in the reception for truth, of certain false inferences from the Scriptures; and it is the pushing of those inferences to their legitimate conclusions, which has been the means of their disruption. They are at present divided into three parties.

The first of these, though not doubting the correctness of those false inferences, deny the applicability to Christ of the results to which they lead.

The second have permitted those inferences to vitiate the integrity of their faith in Christ, so far as to deny that he shared in *man's liability to die*, and that he stood in the position of an Israelite. This division *abhors* their *brethren* of the first class, who assert both these doctrines.

The third party have pushed those inferences to their obvious and necessary conclusions—conclusions whose atrocity amply demonstrates the falsity of the inferences from which they are derived. These men utterly abhor their *brethren* of both the other classes.

Their inferences are three in number.

1st. That the evils under which men labour, as sorrow, sufferings, and death, are “circumstances of sin,” “of curse,” and “marks of God’s displeasure.”

2nd. That all men are *at birth* under God’s condemnation—because that he imputes Adam’s *personal transgression* to each of his descendants.

3rd. That the Jews, when Christ came, were under the curse of God, because of their failure to keep the law.

The first of these opinions makes it impossible Christ could have partaken of sorrow, sufferings, or death—unless upon the ground of *personal* sinfulness—and of being under the displeasure of God. The second renders it absolutely inconceivable that Christ could have partaken of man’s nature without being also subject *by birth* to *condemnation* on Adam’s account. The third makes it equally impossible Christ could have been an Israelite except by being also involved in the curse of God!

The counter declarations of the Scriptures, ought to have *at once* convinced them, that no inference could be *true* which makes those declarations *false*.

It is the object of the following paper to demonstrate the entire want of soundness in each of those inferences: and to show how *necessarily* such doctrines *compel* the adoption of false views of the humanity of Christ.

HERETICAL DOCTRINES

OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN :

THEIR IDENTITY WITH THOSE OF THE MANICHEES.

FOR centuries the doctrine of the humanity of Christ has been unassailed by any opinions which have either directly or virtually set it aside. The world has long beheld the separate existence of a body claiming the Christian name, while denying both the divinity and atonement of Christ, but for centuries the opposite opinions, those touching his human nature, have been neither openly nor covertly disturbed.

But now this has been done. It has been done, not by men who seem to desire to throw off the restraints of religion ; not by opposers of God and of Christ, but by men who profess to have a more than common regard for both ; it has been done by men who have separated themselves from all other religious communions, who have thereby implicitly, and by their writings *explicitly* condemned all other forms whatever, in which Protestants assemble to worship God ; by men claiming to have been led into the old and simple path of meeting to worship him in sole dependence upon the Lord's promise to be in their midst, and upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit into all truth !

And they who have done this have arrogated to themselves the express and loudly asserted pretence of vindicating the honour of the Lord ! They have branded the opinions which oppose their own with the epithet, "Dishonouring to the Lord," and have thus virtually involved all classes of believers, of whatever denomination, in the same sweeping censure ; for it necessarily follows that if their brethren whom they accuse are guilty of dishonour to Christ, all who now do, and all who for centuries past, have held either implicitly or explicitly the same opinions, both are and have been, equally guilty of dishonouring the Lord. The entire church, is in fact, if their opinions are right ones, proved to have been heretical from the beginning !

The Plymouth Brethren are they who have done this. They have not done it by open and undisguised denial that Christ has come in the flesh. If they had proceeded by that way every one would know how to class their opinions, for they would, in that case, stand at once stripped of their borrowed plumage, and be seen developed as a sect calling itself christian, and having precisely the same claim to that name (but on opposite grounds) which the Socinians have. But they have clothed their error in a garb of zeal for God ; sustained it upon false reasonings ; hedged it in by verbal subtleties and by false inferences from the Scriptures ; and by one or other of these paths they have attained the self-same end they would have done by the open and explicit denial that Christ has come in the flesh.

The doctrines which virtually place all who dissent from them in the position of "dishonouring the Lord," have been principally invented by themselves, and consist in certain false inferences from the Scriptures ; inferences from which it is seen to result that Christ *cannot* have been either a man or an

Israelite without having been also in moral distance from God. To these they have added a doctrine adopted from the creed of others, which, by pushing it to its legitimate conclusion, they have proved to be inconsistent with the idea of Christ's descent from Adam, excepting by placing him also under imputed sin.

Their former doctrines may be summed up as follows. 1st. That death and curse are synonymous; that mortality and liability to death infer *sin*. 2nd. That sufferings, meaning thereby the ills to which the flesh is heir, are "circumstances of sin," "penalties of sin," and in fact identical with, because (so they say) springing out of *sin*. 3rd. That Israel was, when Christ came, under curse because of the broken law; and finally, (the doctrine they have adopted) that all men are born under the *imputation of Adam's sin*.

The necessary result of such doctrine is, that it is impossible to receive for truth the Scripture declaration that Christ was a man, as descended from Adam, and an Israelite as descended from David, without placing him also in the sinner's position, that of himself needing redemption.

To a plain and candid mind the mere consideration of the genealogies of Christ which are given in the Scriptures (apparently for the very end of meeting such opinions as these) will seem to place these points beyond all dispute. Two genealogies of Christ are given us. The one in Luke expressly traces the descent of Christ from Adam the Son of God. The aspect of *this* genealogy is towards the Gentiles, its object being to shew *them* that Christ was the "seed of the woman," who should bruise the serpent's head, and effect the deliverance of man *in general*. The seed of the woman had also the flesh of Adam. Eve was taken out of his side, and he said, "this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of *my flesh*, she shall be called woman, *because* she was taken out of man." (Gen. ii. 23.)

The genealogy in Matthew shews Christ to have descended from Abraham. Its aspect is towards the Jews *alone*, to declare to them that Christ was "*the seed*" promised to Abraham, and the Messiah, the Son of David, the saviour of Israel in particular.

A plain, simple-minded man would therefore perceive that Christ must have been a man, because descended from Adam, and that he must have been an Israelite, because descended from David. He would feel that if there was indeed any thing in the circumstances or condition of man or of Israel which inferred moral distance from God, it would be impossible God should place His own Son in any such circumstances or condition. He would learn from the Scriptures that those descended, in the ordinary way of generation, from Adam, whether Jew or Gentile, are *all* under *sin*, and are "by nature children of wrath." But he would observe that those Scriptures expressly declare of Christ, that He did *not* stand in any such place, seeing it is written of Him in one place, that He did not descend from Adam in the same way as other men do, but that His mother was found with child of the Holy Spirit of God, and that He was *therefore* called "*that holy thing*;" and in another place it is written of Him that He was separate and apart from sinners; and that in Him was *no sin*; and he would infer that sin was the *sole moral distance* from God, in which all men are, but in which Christ was *not*.

When such an one reflected how clearly it is recorded in the Scriptures that Christ did suffer sorrow, humiliation and death, he would infer, *not* that He was therefore a sinner, but that there must needs be some essential

distinction between sufferings and sin, because Christ did suffer and was not a sinner. He would reflect too, that as to *mortality*, it is evidently not the same with sin, since Satan is a sinner, and is not mortal; besides which he might observe, that before the sentence of sorrow, labour and death, were passed upon Adam, he was, *already*, a sinner. The sufferings and death are not represented as arising out of sin, but as having been added by God himself to one already possessed of *evil* knowledge.

So too of the position of Israel: a plain man would infer that it was not possible there could have been anything in it, into which Christ could not come, because it is written of Him that He *was* "made under the law;" an Israelite, the Son of David, who was an Israelite. He would rather conclude there was no curse of the law resting upon Israel when Christ came, otherwise it must have rested upon Him, which is impossible.

It is thus the Plymouth Brethren should have reasoned. "Premises, which when pushed to their legitimate conclusion, end in unsound doctrine, must be themselves unsound." Therefore to premise that sorrow, humiliation and death, are circumstances of moral distance, or indications of the displeasure of God, must necessarily be unsound, because Christ endured all these, and was neither in moral distance from, nor under the displeasure of God.

To draw false inferences, and then erect them into premises, is to lay a fruitful basis of error and heresy.

We cannot doubt that it was because God foreknew that the mystery of "God manifest in the flesh" would give rise to controversies, and that Satan would take advantage of the prying disposition of man to turn that mystery into a fruitful source of heresy, that the Scriptures are so very explicit in the declaration that Christ was both God and man.

The Scriptures declare that he who denies that Jesus is *the Christ* (that is the *Messiah*, the Son of David, *q. d.* an Israelite) is a liar. They also declare that he who denies that Christ has come in the flesh (that is, was truly man) is a deceiver and an antichrist; and lastly, that he who denies Him to be the Son of God, has no part in God or in Him.

But notwithstanding these denunciations, terrible and fatal to the souls of those who wilfully hold such doctrines, heresies have arisen and upon the mystery itself, so clearly defined to man. Such heresies there were, even in the days of the apostles themselves. In latter times they took two distinct and opposite forms. The Socinian heresy denied the Godhead, the Manichean heresy the manhood of Christ.*

The pretext of both was "*the glory of God*:"—which the one supposed to be manifestly derogated from by the belief that one subject to sufferings and death could be also God. The Socinians therefore denied the Godhead of Christ.

The others, under the same pretence, "*the glory of God*," denied that he came in the flesh. They inferred that mortality and sin are identical, and

* Note.—Both these forms of heresy sprung into existence in the third century. Socinianism did not receive that name until the sixteenth century, but was a mere revival of the opinions of Paul of Samosata. The Manichean heresy was based upon a sort of mystical mythology, but stripped of that, its broad characteristic is seen fully developed as a heresy opposite to that of Paul; that is, it recognizes the divinity but denies the humanity of Christ. That is the essential point in which the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren coincide with those of the Manichees.

therefore found no way to escape out of a supposed dilemma, but in denying the *bond fide* manhood of Christ; accordingly the Manicheans affirmed that it was only a *seemingly* human body in which he suffered upon earth and was crucified.*

The Unitarians of the present are but the Socinians of former times; but is the Manichean heresy swept from the earth, or is there not reason to fear their opinions are under revival? They have been revived.

That the great body of Plymouth Brethren are virtually Manicheans, is plainly seen from the fact that they justify the very dogmas upon which that heresy was founded. Under pretence that "dishonour" is done to the Lord by the opposite belief, they have affirmed that he did not share in man's liability to die; that his body was *not* mortal; and that he could not suffer *as man suffers*, without being also in the sinner's place before God. These opinions have arisen out of the same source of erroneous inference as the Manichean heresy sprang from. Because men are sinful and also mortal, they cannot conceive of one becoming mortal yet without sin. The Scriptures indeed plainly enough assert that Christ was "sent in the likeness of sinful flesh,"—therefore, mortal—that is, under the same necessity to die which belongs to the flesh of which he partook. They affirm that he partook of flesh and blood for the express end that he *might* taste of death for every man; yet, for all that, the Scriptures aver with equal plainness that "in him was *no* sin."

There are three false conclusions to which the Brethren have come, these they have established as premises which are not to be so much as questioned; and from them have resulted all the discord and error into which they are plunged. They may be summed up as follows:—

1st. That mortality, that is, liability to death, together with whatever of suffering may be comprised in God's sentence of sorrow and labour, are, in themselves "*circumstances of sin*"—"penalties of sin" and "*curse*;" and therefore, that sorrow, labour, and death are in fact identical with, or inseparable from, the principle of *sin*.

2ndly. That man is not merely a sinner as deriving the principle of sin from Adam, but that he is also born under condemnation, as under the imputation of Adam's sin.

3rdly. That Israel was under the curse of God when Christ was born amongst them.

Let us, in the first place, show the error of each of these inferences, in the order in which they occur, and afterwards inspect some passages in the writings of the Brethren in which they are stated.

The Apostle has stated, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." That shows the order of the circumstances of the fall. Sin entered *first* and *then* death. This, of itself, would show that they are two separate things, unless death *so* followed as a consequence of sin, as to have the relation to it which effect has to cause; so that sin, as it were, was the seed, and death the fruit it bore. But it was no such thing.

God had said to Adam, "thou shalt not eat of it, for *in the day* that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The tree of which he was forbidden to eat was called by God, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The ser-

* Note.—This doctrine, or rather *its equivalent*, has been also put forth by one of the Plymouth Brethren as will be noticed in its place.

pent was permitted to describe the property of that tree yet more plainly—he said, “God doth know that *in the day* ye eat thereof, THEN your eyes shall be opened.” Adam and Eve ate thereof, and *immediately* “the eyes of them both were opened; and they *knew—that they were naked.*” This was the entrance of evil knowledge—they were ashamed of their nakedness, of which, before they had eaten, they had *not* been ashamed. (Gen. ii. 25.) Let us remark here that this painful feeling entered their minds straightway upon the eating of the tree; just as effect is seen to follow cause. The next effect of the *change of their minds* we perceive in their hiding themselves from God, and in the *lie* Adam uttered to account for his having done so. “I hid myself,” he said, “*because* I was naked.” This was a direct lie. If he was naked, God had made him so, and he had before been naked before God, and he had not been afraid. The truth was, he had *disobeyed*, and was afraid because of the sentence of death—it was therefore he hid himself, and not because he was naked. The words of Christ serve to throw great light on the state of Adam’s soul at that moment. “Every one,” he says, “that doeth evil hateth the light; neither cometh he to the light, lest his evil deeds should be reprov’d.” Adam *had* done evil, therefore he hated the light, neither came he to it, but hid himself *lest* his evil deed should be *reprov’d*, and not, as he insinuated, out of reverence for the presence of God. Hatred to light, is hatred to God, who is the *alone* light, and we find this manifested in Adam’s words, “the woman THOU gavest to be with me”—it is nothing less than throwing his sin upon God.

We see, therefore, that sin entered Adam’s heart through eating of the tree. Evil knowledge had evidenced itself to be *the principle of sin*, before God came into the question at all, and this had been derived from the tree *alone*. The words of God to Adam place this beyond dispute. “Who told thee thou wast naked? hast thou eaten of the tree?” It is as though he had said, “Thou knowest thy nakedness—THEN, thou *hast* eaten of the tree.” It is the effect seen, and the cause assigned. Nothing can be more manifest than that the tree had the property of imparting evil knowledge.

Wherefore *evil*—sin—that is the death of which God had spoken, when he said “*in the day*” that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;—it is sin, which the Apostle says, came in first; in another place we read, “The whole world lieth in wickedness;” and in a third place, it is written of those who had been called out of that state, “Ye were *dead* in sin;” finally, the entire Scriptures of the New Testament proceed upon the fact that men are, by nature, in a state of *moral* death, from which they are quickened by the power of God to faith in Christ, who is “the life,” and then the believer is said to be “passed *from death* unto life.” It was to emphasise this truth that Christ said to a *disciple*, “Follow me, and let the *dead* (all those *not* believers) bury their dead.”

We may see from these considerations, and no less from the facts of the case, that it was not of the death of the body God spoke, and therefore our translators erred when they rendered the Hebrew word by “*shalt*;” it should have been “*wilt* surely die.” For if “*shalt*” be the right translation, it conveys a threat, the execution of which *ought* to have had effect from the hand of God “*in the day*” in which Adam did eat. If God had spoken of the death of the body, then Adam *would* have died *in that day*,—but he did not; he lived in the body for more than nine hundred years afterwards. It could not therefore have been of the death of the body of which God had spoken. On the other hand we see that “*in the day*” in which Adam ate, sin, the moral death, did

enter, following the eating of the tree, precisely as effect is seen to follow its cause. This proves that the words of God were of the nature of *warning*, and more properly conveyed in the words "wilt surely die." The words also of Eve, to the serpent, fully bear out this view. She said "God hath said ye shall not eat of it *lest* ye die." Eve had evidently understood the words of God in the sense of *warning*, of an evil result. Now Eve had not yet fallen, and we cannot believe she *perverted* the words of God, before the entrance of sin, excepting by declaring that she was created with a principle of sin within her. What then becomes of the words "by one man sin entered," if there was sin in the heart before the act of disobedience was consummated.*

We have therefore seen that sin entered, and existed in Adam's heart, *before* and quite irrespectively of the death of the body. Nothing can be more evident than that these are two separate things—because the one existed before and had no necessary connection with the other.

The death of the body was added *after* the existence of evil knowledge in Adam had been discerned by the Creator. It was added by the separate sentence of God for the act of *disobedience*, and it is that to which the apostle refers when saying "death by sin." Let us endeavour to discover the *purpose* of God by it.

The state of Adam before the sentence of death was passed upon him, was clearly one of sin, which had entered through the eating of the tree. Sin is also, in the phraseology of the Scriptures, termed "*darkness*." The attributes of God, on the other hand, are "holiness and light," and these are essential opposites of sin and darkness. Adam was therefore in essential opposition to, and that is *entire moral* distance from God. He was so *already*; quite irrespectively of any sentence which God might pass upon him. Wherefore no sentence which God might award, could increase a moral distance which was already entire; the opposedness of darkness to light. Eternal punishment, had it immediately followed, would have made that distance eternal, as to *duration*, but neither would nor could have effected the *nature* of the thing for which the punishment was awarded. Had such punishment followed, it would have been because God saw that the state of Adam had placed an eternal barrier between God and man; but the punishment *itself* would not have increased the sin which Adam had acquired by the eating of the tree.

Wherefore, as it plainly could not do so, we are not to suppose God at all designed that the death of the body should add to Adam's *moral distance* from God.

What then was the purpose of God in the death of the body? That may be gathered from the words of Genesis iii. 22, 24. The possession, by Adam, of *evil knowledge* is first assigned as the reason of the action which follows, "and now" God said, "*lest* he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and *live for ever*," THEREFORE—the Lord God "drove out the man from the Garden of Eden."

* Note.—It is easy to conceive that Satan's insidious question, "Yea! hath God said?" might already infuse doubt into Eve's mind. But that she was induced to say God had said what he had *not* said, can scarcely be conceived, but upon the ground of sin being *originally* in her heart.

There is a *wide* difference between freedom of will taking an incipiently wrong direction, and the present existence of evil which frames and utters a *lie*.

In other words, Adam was driven forth, lest he should by eating of the tree of life, rise above the sentence of the death of his body. Adam, then, was driven forth *lest* he should frustrate God's purpose in the death of the body. Wherefore God's purpose in the sentence of death was to *circumscribe the period of the action of sin in the flesh!* That is, the sentence of death was passed upon Adam *lest* the moral death (the principle of sin) which had entered, should be *perpetuated* in him and his descendants; and he was sent out of the garden lest he should, by eating of the tree of life, rise above, and so frustrate the purpose of that sentence.

Let us pause to admire the wisdom and goodness of God in this. Let us reflect what would have been the consequence of Adam's eating of the tree of life. That tree had evidently the property we find ascribed to it, namely, that he who should eat of it would *live for ever*. It is no less evident that Adam would have imparted that principle to his descendants, just as he has imparted the principle of sin, which he acquired by eating of the tree of evil knowledge, and mankind would have been an imperishable race of *sinful beings!* If sin has produced such loathsome and terrible results even in those who have had the certainty of death before their eyes, *what* would it have done, where there was no *possibility* of death? If all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth while death acted as, at least, some sort of curb, what would have been the state of things had there been no such restraining fear! Supposing even that God had, at any time, cast the entire race into hell, we have not the least ground to believe that would have stayed the *progress* of the evil; for the body, as God had created it, would have been indestructible, and would, for all we can know to the contrary, have continued for ever producing new races of eternally miserable and desperately wicked creatures.

But besides this, not one of all the race could have been saved; not even as Enoch was, because there is no Scriptural ground to believe that he received mercy, except as every other soul of man receives mercy, viz.: "according to the purpose and grace given to him in Christ before the world began," through *faith*, that is, of the pre-ordained death of Christ, which would *then* have been an impossible thing—for had he become man, he too would have been beyond death, and could neither have tasted of it for others, nor "through death have destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

And thus too, we see that the purpose of God in the death of the body, was not merely to limit the action of sin in the flesh, but in *Satan also*; and herein he will in due time, experience the truth of the written word, "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray into an evil path, he shall fall himself into his own pit."

How narrow then is the estimate of the manifold wisdom of God, which looking only to its immediate surface of present evil, can call the death of the body "*a curse*." We may see that to have permitted men to live for ever in a body whose *law* is *sin*, would have been indeed a curse of a magnitude and horror which the heart shrinks from contemplating. What *can* be the nature of the *faith* of the *believer* who can deliberately term death *a curse*? What estimate has he formed of this world, and what of the world to come; It was in no such spirit Paul spoke when he said, "to *me*, to die is *gain*," "to depart and be with Christ is *far better*." If death be but the brief passage to joys "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the

heart to conceive," if there are pleasures at God's right hand *for ever*, is that fitly termed a *curse*, by which men are transferred to them?

Let us now take a summary view of the *circumstances* (as the Brethren term them) of sorrow and labour, which were also added by God to man. Under the words sorrow and labour, are obviously ranged all the sufferings which are incidental to men. Plymouth Brethren have termed these "consequences of sin," &c., by which they have been stamped, with the idea of inseparability from sin. But they are *not* consequences of sin. Sin did not give birth to them, but the sentence of God did; and they were laid upon one who was already a sinner. Sorrow and labour, with whatsoever may be comprised in those words, being by the judgment of God, *cannot* be of the nature of *sin*.* Let us therefore consider *the purpose* of God in the sentence of sorrow, &c. Let us suppose he had passed no such sentence, but only that of death. In that case the curse upon the ground could have had no place, because the necessity to labour springs out of it. Wherefore the case of mankind would have been of this nature, viz. : With the law of sin in his members, bringing forth continual fruit of sin, whose wages are eternal death,—a wages certainly accruing to every man who turned not to God in his appointed way; and the death of the body *alone* in view for himself—together with the sight of its continual recurrence in others; that would have been the sum of evil,—the prospect of eternal life in one scale, and the prospect of eternal punishment in the other; but with no immediate evil, but the death of the body.

Let us reflect *what* effect has this upon men who have in addition to it, sorrow and labour. Is the united effect of all these such as to turn men's hearts to God and to the hope of life eternal? Certainly not. Would then the absence of sufferings have done more to save souls than their presence has done? But let us consider it more deeply. Without necessity to labour, the earth, uncursed, would have yielded its strength spontaneously to man. Without sorrow in any of its forms, men would have had nothing to induce, or force upon their minds, one thought beyond the *present*. The sole evil being death, and that inevitable, it would have been either put from the thoughts altogether, or would have found vent in "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The life of man would have been one of comparative happiness, and would, therefore, have been a very snare and *curse*, because leading by a flowery path, to eternal destruction. It is evident that such a state of things would have *paved the way* to eternal ruin; and it is also equally evident that God, in and by sufferings, has desired to induce a *contrary* line of thought and conduct, and that under the outward appearance of evil, he has veiled a purpose of infinite love. It is through sorrow and labour he speaks to man, that he may be induced to look through the evil to him who ordained it. By sufferings men are deprived of all reasonable grounds *so* to love the present world as to forget there is another. It is by means of sufferings and death, which are the voice of God, that he reminds men that it is appointed to them *once* to die, but *after that* the judgment. "The voice of the Lord crieth in the city, *hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*" Micah vi. 9.

* Note.—Mr. Darby (Remarks, p. 7, note) acknowledges the truth of this, but only to subvert it. He writes, "No penalty, as such, is sinful," and yet persists in saying, (page 25) "that Christ could not by reason of birth, become subject to those penalties, without being also subject to damnation!" Thus making "penalties," which he says are *not* sinful, identical *with* sin.

Wherefore it is to *misrepresent* the gracious purposes of God, if men brand with the epithets of "displeasure of God," "circumstances of sin," and "curse," a sentence which had an object of the purest mercy *alone*.

The next point to be considered is, that of imputed sin, which doctrine the Brethren have adopted from the creed of the *ultra* Calvinists. That doctrine affirms, that all who are descended from Adam labour under imputed as well as original sin : that is, that besides deriving a corrupt nature, each individual stands before God, charged with having done that which the Scriptures themselves affirm was done by Adam alone, namely, "disobeyed God" by eating of the forbidden fruit. In other words this doctrine teaches that *God imputes* personal transgression (that, namely, of Adam) to every soul of man from the moment of his birth.

The effect of this doctrine is, to throw a dark and terrible atmosphere of condemnation around the very name of *humanity*, which renders it inconceivable that Christ could have partaken of it without being also *himself* in need of redemption ! Wherefore the Christian world is *indebted* to the Brethren for exposing its true character ; for if any thing could show the essential error of this doctrine, it is the use they have made of it. They have pressed it to its *legitimate* result, and have shewn that it is impossible Christ could have partaken of humanity in its *general* sense, and *not* have been under the condemnation which the doctrine of imputed sin supposes to rest upon all. But the Scriptures expressly declare that he *was* sent, in the likeness of sinful flesh, which is that of humanity in its general sense, and that while in that condition of being, He and the Father were *one*. Wherefore no condemnation could by possibility rest upon him ; and it results from this one fact that there is no such thing as "imputed sin."

Some of the Brethren have carried out their thoughts to a very strange end. Believing men *in general* to be in moral distance from God, and under especial condemnation because of imputed sin, they have affirmed that Christ did not partake of the flesh and blood of men *in general*, but of the flesh and blood of "*the children*," who are thus of course shewn to have also flesh and blood differing from that of man in general, and *not* in a place of distance from God. This will be adverted to more fully by and by.

While we should feel that the edge of the Scriptures is not on any account to be turned aside, but, on the contrary, all they contain is to be literally and implicitly received, because they are the words of God, yet on the other hand, we should be no less careful lest we be found to place God in a position in which he has not placed himself. We should therefore be very careful that what we receive for doctrine as of God, *is* God's doctrine : that it is plainly set down as truth, and does not clash with the general tenor of what the Scriptures distinctly reveal elsewhere. There *can* be no discord in truth—if there appear to be discord, it is made to appear so by men *alone*.

Now there is, in the idea of imputation of sin, that which not only *clashes* with, but utterly *contradicts* a principle which God has explicitly laid down in the Scriptures. The Jews had taken up a proverb amongst them : they said, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Ezekiel xviii. 2. Now this is the very *essence* of the doctrine of imputed sin.

The entire chapter in which that proverb is made matter of *reproach* to the Jews, is, from beginning to end, one strong repudiation, by God, of that thought. He says, "The Son shall *not* bear the iniquity of the father," "*the* soul that sinneth, *it* shall die," and again, "I will judge you every one according to *his* ways." The whole of that chapter repudiates the *principle* of imputed sin, and shews that, as every man does now, so Israel *then* stood before God, not under judgment because of the imputed guilt of another, but as righteously obnoxious to punishment for his own sin, and as standing each on his own individual responsibility before God.

That chapter may be said to suggest and answer the question, "Does God do anything without the most absolute necessity for it?" Where then the necessity to add the imputation of Adam's transgression, to those who are already by reason of the corruption of their nature, in entire moral distance from God? Men are declared to be "by nature children of wrath," "Vessels fitted to destruction," can any thing add to that state? If darkness be the opposite to light, and men are by nature "*darkness*," can any thing increase so entire an opposedness?

Taken then upon its own grounds, the doctrine of imputed sin ought not to be received unless it be so manifestly borne upon the face of the Scriptures as to leave no reasonable ground of doubt that it is indeed of God. But if so, how can it be received when it is not only at variance with the Spirit's teaching by Ezekiel, but it is diametrically opposed to the express declaration, in the very passage from which it is inferred, that "sin is *not* imputed when there is no law." These words affirm the absence of *all* imputation of sin to those described as having no law, viz. the entire masses of mankind excepting the Jews, who alone had a law. But what are we to understand from that declaration? Certainly *not* that God did not regard sin *as sin*, or treated sin as sin, before the law! The reasons he has assigned for the flood quite forbid that idea. What then did the apostle mean? He was speaking of death as *as an abstract principle*, and of its passing upon all men *as such*, and he says that it passed *irrespectively* of either *personal* or *imputed* sin. And *this* is the point at issue, viz. whether death passed upon men as an abstract principle,—or on account of the imputation of Adam's transgression.

The chief view of the supporters of the doctrine of imputed sin is this,—that whereas it is plainly declared in Romans v. 12, &c., that death, which entered by Adam, was by him passed upon all men, and that it is no less evident it did not pass upon them because of their own personal transgression, as is especially seen in infants who die, though it is not possible they could have offended, it irresistibly results that death could have reigned *only* in consequence of Adam's personal transgression being *imputed* to all men: and they believe this view is confirmed by rendering the words of the Apostle "*in whom*," instead of those in the text, "*for that*" all have sinned.

With respect to this view we may observe, that an inference can be *irresistible* only, when there is absolutely no other equally reasonable conclusion from the premises; and in this particular instance it can be the right inference *only* in case the Scriptures do not give clear ground to believe that death passed upon mankind upon quite another ground than that of imputed sin. But if the Scriptures have declared that death passed upon mankind upon quite another ground, the doctrine of imputed sin must *fall*. For the truth of imputed sin rests, even by the shewing of its supporters, altogether upon the fact

whether death passed upon mankind because Adam's transgression is imputed to them, or upon quite other ground.

We may premise that it is impossible the Holy Ghost can contradict himself. It may please him to give *more* light in one place than it has pleased him to do in another, but discrepancy in his testimony is an impossible thing, because he is the Spirit of Truth. Wherefore it is not to be supposed that the statements of the Holy Spirit, by Paul, can *essentially* differ from those which he made by Moses. But if we read Paul as declaring that death has passed upon mankind because of the imputation of Adam's sin, we *do* make him speak at entire variance with the declaration by Moses, that death passed upon mankind because of the actual existence of evil knowledge! For we read in Gen. iii. 22, 23, "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and *evil*; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and *live for ever*, THEREFORE, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden." These words declare, that because Adam had acquired the knowledge of evil, God sent him from Eden, that he might not live, but *die*. The conclusion is that the design of God in the death of the body was simply that man, in his sinful state, should live only the limited period which it might please him to assign to him; and this is at entire variance with the doctrine that death passed because of *imputed* sin.

But we see it also expressly stated that death passed upon Adam in punishment of his own *personal* disobedience. That is borne upon the very face of the words of God, "Because *thou*"—"hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying thou shalt *not* eat of it"—"unto dust *thou* shalt return." Adam and Eve were *alone*: none had, as yet, been even begotten by them, for it was not until they had been expelled from Eden, that Adam knew Eve as his wife, wherefore death was *to them* a personal punishment for personal transgression.

But it could not pass as a *punishment* upon their children thereafter to be begotten. There is no sort of *necessity* for such a supposition, because death, having entered, would necessarily pass upon their children, in virtue of the design of God that it should limit the period of the action of evil, *in all flesh*.

It is this which enables us to understand why death reaches infants, without either personal or imputed transgression. They die because they have in their flesh the principle of evil, and it is the declared purpose of God that all flesh in whom that principle is, *shall die*. The apparent hardship of the removal of infants by death, is effectually met by the perception that as they die, in the flesh, in Adam, so they live, in resurrection, in Christ. Few who believe this will see any thing really worthy of regret in the removal of little children from this hard and evil world.

We may add here, that even granting the reading of Romans v. 12, to be "*in whom*" all have sinned, we must obviously compare it with the words "*made sinners*," or, as some term it, "*constituted sinners*," for we have no right to lay hold of a particular phrase, and base a doctrine upon it to the exclusion of the general sense of Scripture. It is by comparing things spiritual *with* spiritual that we can alone hope to attain *truth*; and if we do so we shall go at once to the history of the first who were born to the fallen pair, in whom we see the earliest results of the entrance of the principles of sin and death. Let us see how Cain was made a sinner in Adam, and how death passed upon Abel. Was it imputed sin which moved Cain to slay his bro-

ther? Or was it not the sinful principle which he had derived from Adam, which wrought in his members, bringing forth fruit unto death? If it be, as it must surely be, conceded that it was the latter, what difficulty is there to understand that "in Adam" Cain had been *made* a sinner? But in adopting the words "*in whom*" the Apostle's words are dislocated, his reasoning requires the rendering of the text "for that all have sinned,"—for these words are connected with and explained by those which follow—"for," he says "sin was in the world." That would be dislocated by reading "in whom," and would require the substitution of other words,—as "*Besides this,*" sin was in the world."

And let us now consider the death of Abel. If the principle of death was designed by God to pass upon mankind, irrespectively of personal transgression, and because *alone* they had in them the principle of evil, we can easily perceive how it must operate in Abel's case. Death must, sooner or later (unless specially translated, as were Enoch and Elijah,) overtake him, *whatever* might be his personal state before God—whether one of acceptance or of sin. But if it was not so; if death passed upon mankind as a punishment to which they had become obnoxious because of the imputation of Adam's transgression, it was therefore passed upon Abel as a punishment because of imputed transgression. But that conclusion is at variance with the records of Scripture, for they state that Abel, before he died, had obtained witness that he was *righteous*, that is, absolutely absolved from *all* sin, imputed, derived, or personal. Wherefore death ought not to have touched him—for how could the punishment due to imputed sin fall upon one who had been absolved from it?

If we now turn to the words of the apostle in Romans v. we shall see nothing at variance with those of Moses. On the contrary, he is referring to them. His mode of speech shews that. He says "*As* by one man," &c., that form of speech supposes the Romans to know all about the entrance of sin and death, as they are recorded in Genesis; as he writes in the 7th chapter. "I speak to them that know the law." Or if there were any who did not know it, then it was no less a reference to the record of the fall of man; and his words would be understood thus;—"As" (you will find it so stated in Moses) "by one man, &c."

But the apostle also casts us upon that record, and to it we must have recourse if we would understand his doctrine. Nevertheless his own words are plain enough. He is speaking of the *original* entrance of sin and death, and says both were brought into the world by Adam. Then taking up death alone, he says, it passed upon all men; "and *so* passed" are his words, and that is as if he had said, "having once entered the world, it *of course* passed upon all man." For what was to arrest it? There was but one way in which the course of death in the flesh might have been arrested; by eating, namely, of the tree of life. But God had hindered that; wherefore it must necessarily pass upon all who derived from Adam at once the evil principle and the principle of death. And it passed, not because of either personal or imputed transgression, but because its design was to bring to an end in the flesh all those in whom the knowledge of evil was a principle of sin.

The purpose of the Apostle in referring to the entrance of sin and death was simply and solely to contrast the second Adam with the first. The first Adam was the author of sin and death to all his posterity *in the flesh*—the second Adam the author of righteousness life and to all his children *in the Spirit*.

Let us now enter upon an examination of another reading of Romans v. 32, which has been proposed by one of the supporters of imputed sin. He proposes to read "*on the ground that*," instead of "*for that*" all have sinned. He writes, "Imputed sin is the especial subject of Romans v. It is taught in the following passage, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, on the ground that all have sinned.' Observe, it does not say on the ground that all are sinful, but on the ground that all HAVE SINNED, i. e., of course in a representative."* Upon this we may remark that if all *have sinned*, whether in a representative or not, they *are sinners*, and if so, there can be no room for imputation. But the writer has assumed that which it was his business to prove, either by reasonings or by Scripture; he has done neither, but has assumed the very matter in dispute. "Of course," he says, "in a representative." That is begging the question. Why of course? A conclusion can be "*of course*" only when there is absolutely no other way of accounting for a thing, and that has been shewn *not* to be the case here. But Mr. N.'s new reading makes nothing for the doctrine of imputed sin; for if death did pass upon all men "on the ground" that all have sinned, that only serves to explain the Apostle's words next following, "*For*," he says, "*sin was in the world*." Wherefore, the fact that sin was in the world explains how necessarily all men must *have sinned*; and we may gather that the Apostle designed to shew, that *though* death came originally by Adam's means alone, yet its passing upon all men was no injustice, since in point of fact, the sinful principle which entered by Adam, equally brought forth fruit unto death in all.

But in reading the Apostle's words, so as to make him say that death passed upon mankind "*upon the ground*" that all "*have sinned*," we make him contradict himself as well as Moses; for he immediately adds, that sin was *not* imputed; that is, *that death* did not pass upon men either because of personal or imputed sin. The Apostle's doctrine is that death had been brought in for a general or abstract purpose, which operated irrespectively of the existence of transgression.

Mr. N. continues thus; "Thus, if we ask why death passes on infants and idiots, persons who have never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, that is by breaking a known commandment, the answer is, because they are considered to have sinned, just as Levi is considered to have paid tythes to Melchisedec, when Abraham his forefather paid them. Infants who have never sinned personally, die on the ground of having sinned, and thus perpetual evidence is afforded us, of the reality of imputed sin."

We may remark upon this, that the Apostle in Heb. vii. 9, is inferring the superiority of Melchisedec, from the fact that Abraham paid tythes to him, and bowed to his blessing; and his argument is, that if Melchisedec was superior to the ancestor, how plainly so to the descendant. It is to strengthen this view, that he says Levi may, *in a manner*, be said to have personally acknowledged that superiority, since he was in Abram's loins when he paid tythes to Melchi-

* Note.—"Doctrines of Popery, by B. W. Newton." Part ii. pp. 15—17. The writer commends "The very correct and Scriptural description of transmitted corruption (original sin) given in the Articles of the Church of England," and regrets they have taken no notice (that is *the fact*) of the doctrine of imputed sin. Why did it not occur to him that the omission arose out of the fact, that they who drew them up perceived that doctrine was *unprovable* from Scripture?

sedec. But what possible analogy is there between this transaction and the imputation of sin? The argument from analogy will prove Levi *a sinner*, but will throw no light upon imputation, because *that* is, if it exists, the act of God alone.

Thus, if Levi did pay tithes in Abraham, he *consented* to Melchisedec's superiority. And if Levi ate of the tree in Adam, he *consented* to Adam's disobedience, wherefore Levi was actually *guilty*, and imputation is superfluous.

Perhaps the best way of shewing the *non sequitur* of imputation of sin, as argued from the case of Levi, is to reduce it to a syllogism; as thus,

1. Adam transgressed in eating of the tree.
2. Levi being in Abram's loins, consented to Melchisedec's superiority.
3. Wherefore God imputes Adam's disobedience to Levi personally.

Who does not see the absurdity of such a conclusion? Neither can the last clause be altered *in any way* which will not prove Levi an *actual sinner*. But if the Apostle's *own* reasoning be subjected to the same process, the result is perfect truth, as thus,

Of death :—

1. Death passed upon all men by Adam's means.
2. Levi was a man.
3. Wherefore death passed upon Levi.

Of sin :—

1. Until the law sin (alone) was in the world.
2. All men who lived before the law were in the world.
3. Therefore all men had sinned.

If imputed sin were a fact, there would be no need of elucidation of it, nor could it be illustrated, for it supposes the act of God alone. To say that all men were in Adam's loins when he transgressed by disobedience, might indeed be adduced (if the consent of yet unbegotten beings could be inferred from that fact) to prove that they had sinned with Adam, but would throw no sort of light upon imputation, because imputation *supposes no* actual guilt, or it is *superfluous from that moment*; and in fact it may be doubted if such reasonings do not betray a lurking perception that the doctrine needs apology; at all events they prove too much, since they prove there is no occasion *for* it.

But what is its object? Is it to glorify God? Does the statement that "infants who have *never* sinned, die on the ground of *having* sinned," glorify God? The writer adds, "Imparted corruption is, in no sense, the *cause* of our original condemnation; Adam's transgression is the cause; *the corruption of nature is a resulting* penalty;" again, "It is of extreme importance to remember that imputed sin, not imputed corruption, is the ground on which the Scripture (*Quære where?*) rests our condemnation. When Adam sinned his one act of transgression brought him at once under condemnation, the depravation of his nature becoming the *effect*, not the *cause* of his being in that state of condemnation." Do these statements glorify God? The latter clause does not accord with the Scriptures, for they state that sin first evidenced itself as an existing evil, and that *then*, when its existence had been *tested*, God passed the sentence of death, which is the *only condemnation* he did pass upon Adam. To this remark we may add, 1st. That if the imputation of Adam's transgression be the original cause of man's condemnation, how is God said in the Scriptures to judge every man according to his own works; they are already condemned, and upon quite other grounds! 2nd. If the

corruption of nature be a *penalty* resulting from the imputation of Adam's transgression, how can God punish eternally for the consequences (acts of sin) *necessarily resulting* from the penalty he himself laid upon man!

It may be added that the doctrine of imputed righteousness does not throw even a *reflective* support on that of imputed sin. The Scriptures declare that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; that he who is washed *in him* is clean every whit; that the blood which cleanses also justifies, that is makes actually righteous. These words intimate *much more* than imputation. The word *imputed* is used in connection with righteousness in Romans iv. 22—25, and it is used in contradistinction to "debt." It is used, therefore, to denote "free gift," and when righteousness was *once* reckoned to Abraham, he *was* righteous, because it was freely given to him.

There is yet one other ground on which some appear disposed to base the idea of imputed sin; viz., upon the words "judgment to condemnation," which occur in the 16th and 18th verses of Romans v. They appear to have been *scared* by the mere sound of those words, and never stopped to enquire their meaning. Had they done so they would have discerned that as the Apostle was speaking of the passing of the death of the body upon all men, it must necessarily have been *that* to which he again referred under the words "judgment to condemnation," and the entire construction of the whole passage would have shown them that it was of the death of the body alone of which the Apostle spoke. Besides which, the Scriptures give no sort of account of any other judgment passed by God upon Adam, but that of sorrow, labour and death.*

The last source of the error of the Plymouth Brethren remaining to be examined, is their conclusion on the subject of the curse of the law. They hold that the position of Israel was, when Christ came, one of curse because of their failure to keep the law. But if Israel was under curse, each individual Israelite was also under curse; whence it follows of necessity, that it is

* Note.—It needs scarce to say that the doctrine of imputed sin is not recognised either in the Articles or Homilies of the Established Church.

I extract from the writings of the learned and excellent Dr. Dwight, the celebrated American divine, upon this subject. "Moral actions are not, so far as I can see, transferable from one being to another. The personal act of any agent, is in its very nature, the act of that agent solely, and incapable of being participated by any other agent. Of course the guilt of such a personal act is equally incapable of being transferred or participated. The guilt is inherent in the action, and is attributable, therefore, to the agent only."

"So clear is this doctrine, that I presume no evidence was ever supposed to be derived originally from reason to the contrary doctrine. If, therefore, any evidence can be found to support this doctrine, it must be found in revelation. But in revelation, it is presumed, it cannot be found. Unquestionably it is nowhere directly asserted in the Scriptures. If it be contained in them, it must be by implication. Let me ask, where is this implication? Certainly not in any use of the term 'impute' commonly appealed to by the supporters of this scheme. I have examined with care every passage in which this word and its connections are used in the Scriptures, and feel completely assured that it is used in a totally different sense, in every instance, without an exception. The verb '*logizomai*,' which is the original word rendered by the English word 'impute,' denotes originally, and always, '*to reckon, to account, to reckon to the account of a man; to charge to his account;*' but never to transfer moral action, guilt, or desert, from one being to another." (Dwight's System of Divinity. Sermon xxxii. Human depravity derived from Adam, 6).

impossible Christ could have stood before God either in the position of Israel generally, or of an Israelite in particular, without being also under curse. This necessary result is *alone* enough to prove the error of that doctrine, because as the Scriptures do unmistakably declare him to have been the Son of David who was an Israelite, there could have been no such curse resting upon Israel. The doctrine itself has arisen from a *total* misconception of the objects of the law and of its curse; but before proceeding to consider this point, let us take a general or abstract view of the subject.

If God had designed that the position of Israel should be one of curse in consequence of failure to keep the law, then their position was one of curse when they made the molten calf, in the very face, as it were, of God upon Sinai. But it was, on the contrary, long after that and many other acts of rebellion, that God said to Balaam, "Thou shalt not curse the people for they are *blessed*;" and Balaam himself spoke under the direct guidance of God when he said, "how shall I curse whom God hath *not* cursed?" and again, "God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Behold, I have received commandment to bless, and he *hath* blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is *with him*." How can these words consist with the doctrine that Israel was then under curse? And if not *then*, when the presence of the glory of God upon Sinai aggravated their guilt to the uttermost, at what subsequent period up to the coming of Christ, could the position of Israel have become that of curse? But it may be said, that those to whom the words of Balaam referred, were not they who had made the molten calf, and who had so often rebelled against God, but that that generation had utterly perished in the wilderness. Most true; but the instance of the children of those rebels, whom God himself declared to be *blessed* and *not cursed*, strikes at the very root of the doctrine of the Brethren; for it establishes the *principle* that the sins of the fathers did not vitiate the standing of the children before God; that is, did not entail a position of curse upon them; and this principle, established in the first generation, would continue to operate even to the end of the Jewish dispensation.

But *correct* appreciation of the Scripture declarations concerning the state of the human race because of their sinfulness by nature, enables us to perceive that it was not in the power of curse to alter the *moral* position of the Jews for the worse. They were, as descended from Adam, *in sin*. The state of sin, is a state of heart alienation from, and *enmity* to God; it is a state of darkness and of moral death; a state of exposure to the wrath of God. That is the Scripture (which is God's) estimate of the moral position, *by nature*, of every son of Adam. And what can add to it! Opposite terms are used throughout the Scriptures, in speaking of the attributes of God and those of fallen man, and they express *God's estimate* of the infinite opposedness of sinful nature, to himself;—and that opposedness is *moral* distance,—as entire as that of darkness is from light. Wherefore it was not in the power of curse itself to add to that *moral* distance. Neither when Christ shall pronounce the words, "Depart ye accursed, &c." will *they* in any respect add to the *moral* distance from God of those to whom they shall be addressed. *That* was originally entire, and it is because it *remains* entire, not having been put away by faith in Christ, that the wicked will be finally severed from God and from good.

Let us now enter upon the objects of the law and its curse.

The law had a twofold character, and it contemplated two distinct objects. It had, first, a temporal character and a temporal object; and secondly a spiritual character, and a spiritual object. The curse was also in one sense of a temporal character alone; and in another of a spiritual character alone; and it has been, by *confounding* these, that the mistaken doctrine of the Brethren has arisen.

In its temporal character, the law presented a code of statutes and judgments, *in themselves*, essentially equitable and righteous, such as *never* nation had before, (Deut. iv. 8.) To their observance God attached the promise of the fullest blessing, and to departure from them, denunciations of the fullest curse. But what meaning are we to attach to those words? Let the Scripture reply for itself. A simple perusal of Deuteronomy xxviii. will convince any reader that both the blessings and the curse were to descend upon the Jews in earthly things *alone*, and were therefore of the character of rewards and punishments. Disobedience was to be visited "according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law."—(Deut. xxix. 21.) But there are *no other* curses written in the book of the law, than those of xxviii. Deut. and they describe visitations of an earthly, or temporal, character alone. The Scripture, indeed, seems worded with the *especial object* of guiding us into the *meaning* of the word curse in its temporal character; for before entering upon its nature, it is expressly written, "all *these* curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee," and *then* follows their description: again, in the next chapter, (29th) the curse is, in three separate places, referred to as identical with the visitations detailed in the 28th. And we find Daniel, while confessing that the righteous anger of God had fallen upon Israel, and that the curse was poured out upon them, yet carefully distinguishing it as none other than that which was written in the book of the law: and it was of its form of *captivity*, he was even then praying to God. So again in Malachi, we find the prophet saying to Israel, ye are cursed with *a curse*," but the whole prophecy shews that, in this instance, "the curse was upon their blessings," and was of the nature of famine. That is of a temporal character—and God added "Return to me, and I will return to you,"—with the promise, upon that return, of reversing the curse, and pouring out in its place the fulness of blessing. (Mal. iii. 10, 12.)

The object of the law and its curse in their temporal character, is palpable. The Jews were, with mere intervals of deliverance, and those by the *mercy* of God, from the days of the Judges up to the coming of Christ, continually under punishment (curse) because of disobedience. They ought, therefore, to have seen that *if* it had proved impossible, by keeping a code of statutes essentially just and righteous, to *deserve* even temporal blessings at the hand of God, it was still more manifestly impossible for them to hope for justification to life from the deeds of the law. Wherefore the temporal working of the law should have opened their eyes to the spiritual character and object of the law.

But the law and its curse, in their temporal character had another object in its aspect towards those who gather the wisdom of God from his dealings with man; viz. to evince that no prospect of hope or blessing even in earthly things, nor any fear of evil even in earthly things, *can* influence sinful beings, whether to keep them from wickedness or to incline them to good.

Let us now turn to the law in its spiritual character, and to the curse in its spiritual object.

"We know," the apostle says, "that the law is spiritual;" that is, it referred to *eternal* things. It referred to *life* eternal. When Moses said of the law, that if a man kept it, he should even *live* by it, it was of life eternal he spoke: and there was involved in that declaration, that *failing* to keep the law, he would *die*; and that death was of an eternal character. It is in Deut. xxx. that he speaks of this spiritual character of the law. He says "I have set before you life and good, and death and evil;" and again "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing." These words are the more remarkable, because that in the 28th chapter, he had made no sort of mention of either life or death, but only of promises and threatenings of a temporal character. It is this which shows the two-fold aspect of the law: that given in the 28th chapter is its temporal, the one given in the 30th is *additional* and is of an eternal character. Moses could not speak of *life* in connection with obedience, because it was not attainable by that way, neither did he; but announced to the Jews the temporal blessings and curses to which they might look. But in the 30th chapter, where he speaks of life and death, they are so placed as to make them interchangeable terms with blessing and good, and cursing and evil, respectively—the life answering to blessing—the death to cursing and evil; and he declares them to *depend upon the state of the heart before God*.

But if life and death were set before the Jews, it is evident that the law was based upon foreseen redemption: and both law and gospel spoke of the same things. It is the opposite opinion which has misled the Brethren. He who has chiefly influenced the minds of the rest, has expressly contemned this truth. He has pronounced the belief of his adversary "that the law was based upon foreseen redemption," a *monstrous statement*, which "*confounds law and grace, responsibility and Gospel, in hopeless confusion*."* Was then the Gospel *not* preached before to Abraham? The apostle says it *was*! even "justification by faith," which *is* the Gospel.

If the law *was not* based upon foreseen redemption, it must have been a *bonâ fide* trial of man by law; and if so the Jews were *right* in seeking to justify themselves by the works of the law, because they had *no other* chance of life. But the apostle says *this was their error*. He charges them with having *failed* of righteousness (which is life) *because* they sought it by works and not by *faith*. It follows that if they had sought righteousness by faith, they would not have failed. But faith on *what*? What was the object of faith to the Jews? Even *the blood given upon the altar for the salvation of the soul*. (Lev. xvii. 11.) Wherefore it is evident that *faith* in the blood of Christ was the way of salvation under the law as well as under the gospel, and if so the law *was* based upon foreseen redemption. The opposite opinion was the *grand mistake* of Israel—a mistake in which Mr. Darby would have shared, and have *failed of righteousness*, as they did.

This doctrine is of vast importance, because it shews us the *grand purpose* of God in the *curse* of the law. Let us therefore prove it.

We say that redemption was the basis of the law. Redemption is attainable *only* by faith in the blood of Christ. "In whom we have redemption through his blood." (Eph, i. 7.)

But *from* what does the blood redeem? From the *second death*, which answers to curse eternal. It is *from it* alone we are redeemed. "He hath

* "Note," "Remarks," &c., by J. N. Darby, page

redeemed us from the curse of the law," (in its eternal character,) "being made a curse for us."

We have to prove that under the Law, the blood of Christ was given to Israel as their sole way of escape from the eternal curse of the law.

The Scripture declarations on the subject of the law may be summed up in five grand heads.

1. On the one hand it was written, "this do and thou shalt live."
2. On the other hand, that life was not of *possible* attainment by obedience.
3. That curse was the due meed of every one who kept not the whole law.
4. *Yet* that God had given "Blood upon the altar for the *atonement* of the soul."
5. That it is not possible for the blood of bulls or of goats to *atone*.

These give us a very perfect chain of information. Coupled with the *offer* of life by obedience, we find the declaration, not only of its *impossible* attainment by that means, but that *failure* amounted to exposure to curse; *yet* was there blood given upon the altar for the salvation of the soul, which was *not* the blood of bulls or of goats. Nothing can be more clear than that the ultimate, that is, the *real*, object of the law was to drive Israel *to the altar*, whose blood, in the declared impossibility of "justification by the deeds of the law," was their *sole* hope of escape from the curse to which they were exposed by reason of failure to keep it. And as the blood of animals had no power to cleanse from sin, yet *was* that which was shed upon the altar, it is manifest it was the foreseen bloodshedding of Christ which was thereupon prefigured to the Jews. Wherefore redemption *was* the basis of the law; and its curse was designed to impel Israel to the redeeming blood, *even as the avenger drove to the sanctuary*.

And this is the very thing affirmed by the apostle in the words, "wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us *to Christ*, that we might be justified by *faith*. The law, being spiritual, was designed to speak to the conscience alone: and it is the especial object of Romans vii. 5, 25, to develop the mode in which God designed the law, in its character of schoolmaster, to act upon the conscience, and bring it to Christ. But such an experience as that supposes a conscience in real exercise before God, and that it is the province of the Holy Ghost alone to work. Moses, however, warned the Jews of this in the words of Deut. xxix. "The Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day." These words should have induced Israel *to ask for them*.

There remains only one other doctrine of the Brethren on this point. Its principle has been already met and refuted, but it may be well to consider it more in detail. It is that the children of the Jews were, at birth, involved in curse, because of the failure of the fathers—and this has been admitted to have been the case with Christ himself, but that he was able to work his way out of it by his own righteousness!

The words of Moses place the curse upon *him* (that is upon the individual) who continued not; and Paul, in repeating the words of Moses, says, "cursed is *every one* who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." In both Moses and Paul there is the same specification, viz.: the curse could fall upon the individual *alone* who broke the law.* A

* Note.—It would be a very *profound* misconception of the Scriptures to suppose that the apostle's words in another place—"as many as are of the works of the law are

general view of the written word on this point, describes the action of the curse of the law to be of this nature, viz.: every one, at circumcision, became debtor to do the whole law. His first transgression exposed him to its curse. But that was the full effect of its operation—exposure to curse attached, by the very words of the law, to the transgressor *alone*. The child of an Israelite was not in a worse position before God, than the child of a Gentile who had no part in God. But if the curse due to the Father's sin fell upon his child also, then the child was in an infinitely worse position than that of a Gentile could be, because, as there was certainty of failure, there was certainty of curse also, the inheritance of every one born to a Jew! A monstrous thought indeed! Where then was "*the advantage*" to the Jew of the law? There was not only no *advantage*, but infinite *disadvantage*. It is therefore manifest that the child of a Jew was exposed to, or under, no curse, until he had himself broken the law, to which he had, by circumcision, become a debtor; and it is equally plain that Christ could be born an Israelite, without being under "birth disqualification," or under any necessity "to *prove* that He *could* extricate Himself by His own perfect obedience," out of a state of curse, in which He was not placed by birth, and into which He never could by possibility have come, or have fallen.

Having thus examined the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren, let the reader reflect how *necessarily* they connect the holders with Manicheanism.

For how can one who conceives that mortality and sin are *inseparable*, believe in his heart that Christ came in the flesh? He cannot do so, since the flesh is mortal, and to have come in the flesh, would be to have come also in *sin*.

Again. How can one who believes sufferings to spring out of sin—and to be in fact identical with sin, believe in his heart that Christ endured sufferings? He cannot, for with him to suffer and be a sinner are one.

Once more. How can one who conceives that *every soul* deriving from Adam is under condemnation for Adam's transgression, believe Christ to have been "the son of Adam?" He cannot do so, for that is to place Him under birth condemnation.

Finally. How can one who believes Israel to have been under curse when the Saviour was born, believe Him to have been "the Christ, the son of David? He cannot do so, because that is to place Him also in Israel's place of curse.

They who have advocated those opinions, have also themselves furnished the best comment on their doctrinal results; and these have been in every

under curse"—applied to Israel before Christ had come and abolished the law. He said "the prophets and the law prophesied *until* John; *since* that time, the kingdom of God is preached." The former dispensation had then passed away, and the present had taken its place. It is to this dispensational distinction the apostle adverts. He who was of the deeds of the law, had no part in grace, by which alone is salvation; and he wrote to warn the Galatians of what would be the practical result to them, of becoming circumcised. They would thereby range themselves in the ranks of those to whom salvation was an impossible thing—since they based their hope of it upon works; and the result of every such hope will, by-and-bye, be seen to be the lake of fire, which is curse eternal.

respect identical with those to which the Manicheans arrived : as will be seen in the extracts about to be submitted to the reader.

With some (it is to be hoped with many) those opinions are probably held without any distinct perception of the doctrinal results, to which they necessarily lead. But that does not emancipate them, so long as they do hold those opinions, either from the guilt or danger of implication in Manicheanism, because they have its root in their own minds. Upon this point we have the strongly expressed judgment of one of their own leaders. He writes—“ *It is a great mistake to suppose that because people have not intelligently received an evil doctrine, they have not suffered by it. The plain simple notion of Christ is undermined, and power against evil and for good destroyed, though the soul is unaware of it. The sense of evil is utterly enfeebled and Christ practically lost.*—(“Remarks” by J. N. Darby, page 4, note.)

EXTRACTS FROM THE PUBLISHED WRITINGS OF SOME OF THE BRETHREN.

Premising that the last part of this work will be found to contain a detail of the origin and causes of the disruption of Brethrenism, let us proceed to an analysis of the statements in which some of them have developed the principles of Manicheanism.

We will first consider those of a Pamphlet entitled, “Remarks by J. N. Darby, on a Letter on Subjects connected with the Lord’s Humanity. October 1848. London, J. K. Campbell, Holborn, opposite Gray’s Inn Lane.”

This paper is chiefly valuable because it contains the sentiments of the man who is unquestionably the author of the schism amongst the brethren. It was he, also, who most vehemently raised the cry of “*dishonouring to the Lord,*” which epithet he attached to the statements of his adversary, Mr. Newton, who once divided with him the admiration and devotion of the Brethren generally.

Judging from the Pamphlet under review, the writer’s mind appears of a singularly chaotic nature. It is replete with apparent contradictions, and vents itself in almost un-understandable paragraphs. One is obliged to peruse, then re-peruse, and this again and again, before one can make out what he *does* really mean ; and it is only by a most diligent comparison of his statements one with another, and then with those of the Scriptures, that we can tell the nature of the former, or find out their discrepancy with the latter. He has evidently discernment of truth—for he puts it forth—but if he does so in one place, it seems only that he may reason it or fritter it away in a more distant part of his work. Now this may arise from infirmity : but it may also betoken deep design. It is related of Cromwell, that while a mere member of the House of Commons, no one knew the meaning of his speeches ; the result proved that he had, full well, understood them himself.

Mr. Darby writes, (page 4) “nobody doubts that He (Christ) was a man and an Israelite, nor that He became so by means of birth.”

Again, (page 16) "I assume that my reader holds, as myself, the true and real humanity of the Lord, both in body and soul;—that He was a true living man in flesh and blood."

And lastly, (note to page 7,) "No one doubts He suffered, and must have been a man to suffer."

If we omit from the above extracts, the words "as myself," they are explicitly orthodox. But unfortunately those words cover a mental protest against their literal meaning! Without the words "as myself," those extracts do not convey the simple truth of the writer's belief either on the humanity or on the sufferings of Christ—or on the fact that He was an Israelite. That is seen by examining his further statements on the same points. We then observe that he invalidates the obvious meaning of his original words, then substitutes another meaning, and in the end "to hold, *as* he does," the form of words which before met the eye, is to hold them in a sense entirely at variance with their simple meaning. For instance, the first step he takes to invalidate the words "the true and real humanity of the Lord," is found in the denial that He was under *necessity* to die, or *liable* to death—and it must be confessed that if this were so, there must have been a wide and even essential difference between the humanity of Christ and that of the human race; because necessity to die, and liability to death, absolutely belong to the humanity of man. The next step he takes in the same way is to declare the humanity of Christ was "*sui generis*;" and he adds, "sinless humanity (that of Christ) sustained by Godhead, is *not the same* as sinful humanity left to itself." So that after all, instead of "true and real" humanity, "that of Christ was not the same as that of man, because the latter is sinful." Having thus invalidated the obvious meaning of his own statements, Mr. Darby proceeds to substitute another meaning for them. He does this by dividing the human race into two distinct classes. One of these in *distance* from God, the other in holy communion. These latter are "*the children*" of whose flesh and blood Christ *did* partake, but not that of the others, whom he says Christ "abhorred!" He carries out this thought while speaking of the sufferings which he will allow Christ did endure, (but restricts them to sympathy alone) and says *that* sympathy was with the children alone, and not at all with mankind in general.

This thought lies at the root of the peculiar ideas which some of the Brethren have formed in respect to the church, which they term "*the thing*," meaning thereby the sole end and object of the mystery of God manifest in the flesh. It *has* eventuated in an high-mindedness, as opposite to the true spirit of Christianity as can well be conceived; but it throws open the door to a worse evil than that—even to entire *antinomianism*; for if there be *something* (as there *must* be by this doctrine) in the flesh and blood of man in general, of which Christ could not, since He did not, partake, it follows that *that something* cannot exist in the flesh and blood of "*the children*." That something must needs be the principle of sin, because the Scriptures declare Him to have been, as man, separate and apart from man only in the article of sin; and we shall by-and-bye see reason to believe this is *secretly* imputed to the condition of *the children*—a doctrine not merely opposed to that of the Scriptures, but resulting in the *necessary* conclusion that the actions of the children, of *what kind soever*, *cannot* partake of the *nature* of sin.

It may be remembered that the Manichean opinions led to a precisely simi-

lar result. St. Augustine, after his conversion, thus writes of his views while yet a Manichee: "The Manicheans are divided into two bodies, Auditors and Elect. I myself belonged to the latter. With them I fancied myself *perfectly sinless*, and laid the blame of the evils I committed, on another nature that sinned within me, and my *pride* was highly gratified with this conception." (Confessions of St. Augustine, book v., see Milner.)

The secret belief of the *sinlessness* of the children, could alone have originated the view which has been published in a paper on prophetic subjects, wherein a class of persons are described as existing upon earth in the latter days who are to *wash their own robes*, that is, attain to salvation by their own inherent righteousness. It is a mere result of the doctrine of the church as "THE thing," "the children."

And let us now see how Mr. Darby's after statements explain away and invalidate his original words, "No one doubts he suffered, and must have been a man to suffer." The extracts will be given below, and will prove that he first insinuates rather than affirms that Christ did not *really* suffer, except in the way of sympathy, and then brings in the astounding declaration, that he could not be exposed to sufferings, *because* he was man, without being also exposed to damnation! It is to get rid of this blasphemous result that he refuses to accede to the doctrine of the sufferings of Christ, except by understanding them of mere sympathy in those of "the children."

These statements involve the idea of a *system*, which lacks only quiet times, and dominant influence to swell it out into an heresy of most evil power.

EXTRACTS FROM MR. DARBY'S PAMPHLET.

1st. Christ under no necessity to die, and not liable to death.

"As to death—if it be meant he was under necessity of death in respect of his relationship to God, then it is false." (p. 21.) "Had he been by necessity under death, he could not have taken upon himself the necessity of dying." (p. 32.)

We may observe that the latter is a very absurd idea. Mr. D. puts the consequent for the antecedent, and then says the former cannot *produce* the latter! Christ took upon himself the necessity of dying, before the world began. It was done, as to design, from the moment he had said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," wherefore, when, in due time, he became man, it was in order to perform that which he had taken upon himself before the world began, and he then placed himself *under the necessity of death*. The Scriptures say that Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and that his death was "according to the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God," wherefore his relationship to God, as that of the Lamb whom he had provided, was that of the Lamb pre-ordained to be slain—that is under absolute necessity of death, *for sinners*.

Objections to the use of the expression "under necessity to die," in their applicability to the Redeemer, arise out of indistinct perceptions of the purposes of God, by the death of the body. It was brought in to subserve three ends, separate, yet working out one grand design. The first of these was the limiting in the flesh of the period of sin's action: and in this sense is applicable to sinful flesh *alone*. The second was that by its means the redemption of man might be achieved; the third, that through death, Satan's own destruction might be accomplished. The two last ends could be achieved only by the

death of the Redeemer ; of the seed of the woman ; wherefore he *must* die in order to effect them. Did he not intimate he *was* "under the necessity to die," in the words, "Thinkest thou I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels ? But how *then* shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus *it must be* ?"

"He was not, as of God, in a condition of losing it." (His life.) "To speak of him as liable to death if something had happened, is mere irreverence." (Note p. 19.)

Liability to death, in its abstract sense, indicates the condition of being of human flesh in general ; and the question of *accident* has *nothing to do with it*. If we were to concede that Christ stood *alone* in the fact that the manner of his death was predetermined, and that the manner of death of men generally is absolutely undetermined, so as to be the sport of chance, even *that* could not affect the fact that his flesh was one with the flesh of man, for that is the *real* question at issue under the word humanity. All the difference would *then* be, that the condition of Christ's existence was that of an appointed and especial end, whereas that of men generally was unappointed, but left to accident. Still that would not affect the *nature* of the flesh, it would be a mere question of the will of God. But it is not true that any man dies by accident ; that is a merely human estimate ; a mere form of expression denoting something *unlooked for* by man ; in its meaning of "*chance*" it can have no truth before him of whom it is written, that "not a sparrow *shall* fall to the ground *without him*." When therefore Mr. Darby writes that "the condition of Christ's being was to lay down his life upon the cross, and he was therefore not, as of God (meaning he was, by special appointment of God, *not*) in a condition of losing it," in any other way, as by accident ; *that* has nothing to do in a question of flesh and blood. It does not, in *point of fact*, even make the condition of Christ's being differ from that of the human race : for no man can lose his life excepting in God's own appointed way. Men are seen to surmount many dangers ; many evident exposures to death, and yet die after all from the most trifling cause. It is well written by one, "Man is *immortal*, till his task *be done*." The removal of the young child into Egypt proves a liability to death from the sword of Herod, *met by God* in providence, and is a type of the mode in which (though to us unseen) he preserves all men, until his set time is come. There is great subtlety in the thoughts we are opposing. A *false* inference, one which if *true* could not affect the question, is first established as unquestionable, of man's condition of being ; viz. : that he is exposed to death by accident : it is then termed *irreverence* to suppose that of Christ, and the weak are driven to the inference, that it is not reverent to say he was "liable to death" in *any* sense ; an inference pregnant with evil ; for if he was not liable to death, he could not die, and has therefore *not* died !

Mr. Darby's views of the Humanity of Christ.

"His humanity, it is said (by Mr. Newton) was not *sui generis*. This too is confusion. The abstract word *humanity* means humanity and *no more* ; and being abstract, must be taken absolutely, according to its *own* meaning. But if the writer means that, in fact, the *state* of Christ's humanity was not *sui generis*, it is quite wrong, for it was united to Godhead, which no one else's humanity ever was ; which as to fact alters its whole condition. For instance it was not only sinless, but in that condition, incapable of sinning." (p. 17.)

This is another subtle attempt to destroy the doctrine of the *real* humanity of Christ, and is an instance of the mode in which this writer invalidates his own concessions. An abstract word, *because* abstract, admits of no other than its abstract meaning. The moment any other meaning is introduced into it, it ceases to be an *abstract word*; its abstract meaning is either enfeebled or altogether destroyed. Mr. Darby first *concedes* this, and forthwith proceeds to attach *another* and separate meaning to the word humanity, though he had said it "being abstract, must be taken *absolutely* according to its *own* meaning!" He introduces the distinctly-separate question of the *state*, or condition of the humanity of Christ, which because that was sinless, he makes to affect the abstract meaning of the *word* humanity! Sinlessness denotes the *moral state alone*; but neither it, nor its opposite, have any thing to do in a question of humanity in its abstract meaning: *this* conveys the simple ideas of a "reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting." The humanity of Adam, that is, the soul and body in which he had been created, were the *same after* as before he had sinned. The *moral* state of his soul had become defiled by sin, and his body's condition of being became defined by "subjection to death," but his manhood was identical. It was in his own image he begat Seth, and that image continued in all the human race, until "the woman" was born, whose "seed" was Christ.

"Humanity (he says again) is always simply humanity. The moment I call it *his*, it is *sui generis*, because it is his; and in fact humanity sustained by Godhead is not humanity in the same state as humanity unsustained by Godhead. Sinless humanity sustained by Godhead, is not the same as sinful humanity left to itself." (pp. 19, 20.) The self-same confusion reigns here. He labours to destroy his own concession as to the meaning of humanity, by affirming that it was no longer simple humanity, but *sui generis* and what he *means* by "*sui generis*," is explained in the same extract to be first "not humanity in the *same state*, and secondly, "*not the same*" with that of mankind, which is sinful. To prop up, or justify these *decidedly* heretical declarations, he confounds the Godhead of Christ with his manhood. These are essentially different things. The Godhead could only alter the manhood of Christ by being mingled with it; *if not mingled*, they were separate, and *then* his Godhead did not affect the *nature*, or *kind* of his manhood. This has been the belief of all ages in the church, and is thus summed up in the Athanasian Creed, which declares of Christ that he was God and man, "not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh," "not by confusion of substance," but "*as* the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." That is, as the soul does not *minge with*, but has separate existence from, yet *with* man's flesh, so Godhead and manhood dwelt in Christ. The evil result of this doctrine of Mr. Darby's may be seen from his own words, that the humanity of Christ was *sustained* by his Godhead. Wherefore his obedience must needs have been *in consequence* of that sustainment! Where then the glory to God? Where its condemning power to angels or to men! This doctrine results in robbing both of God and of Christ; and is the basis of another (to be presently noticed) that the incarnation itself had no foundation in *fact*.*

* Note.—There is no kind of necessity to bring in any question of Godhead in Christ as the power by which he was sustained in obedience, because the Scriptures *distinctly* assign his sustainment to the Father alone. We read in Isaiah xlii. 1, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, and in the third verse, "I the Lord—*will hold thine hand, and will*

Mr. Darby on the Sufferings of Christ.

"Was he by necessity of condition, because he was a man, involved in all the consequences of sin?" "Do not let the reader be misled by the word *"sinless."* (Note to p. 7.) ("*Consequences of sin,*" and "*sinless penalties,*" are terms used by Mr. Newton in reference to the sufferings to which mankind are liable. Mr. Darby demurs to the word *sinless* as descriptive of them, and thus confounds them with the abstract principle of *sin*. He, therefore, because they infer a state of sin, demurs to the *fact* that Christ could endure sufferings of *any kind*, as the following will prove.)

"Christ took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses." "Now how was this?" "I do not doubt his whole soul entered into the sorrow and burden of them before God." "But was he sick and infirm because himself took our infirmities? Clearly not. In a word, it is not the being himself in the state with which he sympathizes, which gives the sympathy." (p. 22.) "His suffering *some* of the consequences of Adam's sin, could not, by *reason of birth* being the means, involve him in *all*, unless birth placed him absolutely by necessity under every possible consequence of sin, in which the being a man by birth involved him." (p. 25.)

In the first of these extracts the ideas of suffering and sin are confounded and made *one*; then the denial that Christ did endure, except in the way of sympathy, and finally the sweeping conclusion that he *could not suffer*, except on the ground of being himself exposed to damnation. Mr. Darby's words have not merely *justified*, but made of *irresistible necessity*, the doctrine put forth by one of his disciples, that Christ's sufferings on the cross were illusory *as to fact*.

Mr. Darby's views of the position of Christ as an Israelite.

"Now that was Christ's place. It was association with the holy remnant in their Israelitish condition. Their relationship to God was a holy relationship, and though they might go through every test and trial of the new nature and faith on which it was founded, and acknowledge all the failure and sin under which they were suffering, their relationship was a holy one with God. Into

keep thee." What words can more expressly assign to the Father the upholding of Christ? On the other hand, we find the Redeemer *owning* this, and assigning his sustainment to *that fact*. For instance, in the 41st Psalm, which he quotes in John xiii. 18, as speaking of him, we find him saying, "And as for me, *Thou* upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face." Again the Lord acknowledges that he had been sent for the express purpose of manifesting *obedience* to the Father. "I came down from heaven, not to do *mine own* will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." And that this was *the cause* of the Father's sustaining him, he himself declares in the words "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, FOR (Greek *ori* because) I do always those things that please him." There are many other passages to the same effect, but these suffice to show the principle manifested by Christ—namely the setting God always before him: and it is *departure from this* which was manifested by the fallen of angels and men. It *becomes* us to believe that a similar course would have *ever* brought the sustaining hand of God to his creatures, their condemnation arises, therefore, both from the fact that they *preferred their own* will to that of God, and that this arose from *no necessity*, as by *creation*. That can have been *proven*, to the glory of God, only by the *literal* humanity of Christ. The *right* of the Creator to the obedience of his creatures being unquestionable, the sole bar to judgment, in case of *failure*, would arise out of the question, "Was there the *power*?" and *that* is what Christ has *set at rest* for ever.

that Christ enters ; he is not associated with man's or Israel's distance, but with the children's relationship to God. Because *the children* partake of flesh and blood, he partook of them." "It was not then, that by taking flesh and blood, he placed himself in the distance of man, but that because he associated himself with *the children* he partook of flesh and blood, and that is all that is said." His relationship was with the sanctified. His spirit entered into every sorrow ; his soul passed through every distress, and he suffered under every temptation ; but his relationship to God was never man's or Israel's as it then was," because his was sinless, theirs sinful." "He identifies himself with the excellent on the earth." With them Christ, in spirit, identifies himself, and abhors the rest." (pp. 23, 24.)

The reader must bear in mind that all this occurs on a question of the *humanity* of Christ ; whether he partook of the flesh and blood of *mankind in general* or not. Mr. Darby once more introduces a question altogether foreign to it, in order to destroy the doctrine that the humanity of Christ was simply humanity. He introduces the doctrine of "the election of grace," and makes the fact that they are alone one with Christ *in the spirit*, *imply also* that they *alone* are and were one with him *in the flesh* ; and thus seeks to destroy the testimony of the Scriptures, that as to his humanity Christ partook of the flesh and blood of *man* in the broad acceptation of that word. This doctrine has already borne fruit of evil, as we shall see by and bye. It serves to show what Mr. Darby *really* meant when he wrote, "Nobody doubts he was a man and an Israelite, nor that he became so by means of birth." He meant a man of the flesh of the children alone ; an Israelite of the flesh and blood of the holy remnant, but having no part in that of man or of Israel in general. We have the distinct division of mankind into two separate classes. One division in distance from God, with whom Christ neither partook of flesh and blood, nor sympathised, but **ABHORRED** them ; the other class, not in distance but in holy relationship with God, of whose flesh and blood *alone* Christ partook and with whom *alone* he sympathised. Occurring as these thoughts do, on a question of the *humanity* of Christ, they involve the most fatal error, and are in flat contradiction to the Scriptures, which declare, not *merely* that God made of *one blood* all the nations of men, but also that all men are equally by nature children of wrath, that is in *total* distance from God.

"What are Mr. Newton's present doctrines," &c., &c., by W. Trotter. London, Nisbet and Co.

Such is the title of a pamphlet we must proceed to refer to.

The "manner of spirit" which would have led the disciples to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans who refused to receive Christ, was of the same vindictive nature as that which has since led others to appeal to the strong arm of the law for the destruction of opposers. It is also the self-same spirit, which in the absence, in these days, of appeals to fire and sword, in support of his doctrines who came "not to destroy men's lives but to save them," expends its energies in the only ways in which it can be gratified, viz., in damnatory accusations and in excommunications. But as surely as all the words of God are truth, and that none of them shall fall to the ground, so surely will they, who acting in a spirit wholly foreign to that of God, yet

presume to think they *glorify the Lord thereby*, find the words of Isaiah lxvi. 5, apply to themselves, and will sooner or later, have effect in their own confusion. "Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, let the Lord be glorified, but he shall appear to your joy, and *they shall be ashamed.*" The spirit of the paper under notice is one of the most bitter vindictiveness. The writer has laboured to fix guilt upon Mr. Newton by *all* means. Yet in presenting it to the world, he does so with the words, "May I ask of God's dear people to implore his blessing upon this feeble effort." Mr. Trotter is, however, right in his estimate of his work; it is a feeble effort; feeble because of his *profound* misapprehension of both the letter and spirit of the Scriptures to which he appeals.

In page 58 he sums up "Mr. Newton's present doctrines" in these words, "The question between Mr. Newton and orthodox christians (meaning himself and those of his party) is this. Whether Christ, because of his relation to Adam and to Israel, stood in such a relation to God and God to him, as placed him under sentence of death; that curse, the doom of man, and the inflictions of God's displeasure which had fallen upon Israel." The *orthodoxy* of Mr. Trotter, enables him to give *false* descriptions of the characters of death and of the position of Israel when Christ came, and then to assert he could not have come under either; but if he could not have come under death because it is a "curse," most assuredly Christ has never *died*; and if Israel was under God's displeasure, most assuredly he was not "the Christ the Son of David." These are the inevitable results of this orthodoxy. But Mr. Trotter's paper is noticed only because he gives that which Mr. Darby does not, the Scriptures upon which they found the doctrine that Christ was under no necessity to die."

He says (p. 29) "Now if there be one thing more plainly revealed in Scripture than another, it is that "the wages of sin is death," and he concludes from this, that "Exposure to death, the being under the necessity of dying, mortality *in that sense* there cannot be, apart from sin, either inherent or imputed.

To which we reply that Mr. Trotter has totally misconceived both the words and the design of the apostle. *What* death does he speak of as the wages of sin? Certainly *not* of the death of the body, but of the second death—the lake of fire. That is clear from a simple analysis of the entire argument in Romans vi. In the 18th verse the apostle tells the Roman converts, that they *had become* the servants of righteousness, and in the 20th verse, that they *had been* the servants of sin. The mention of service naturally introduces that of wages, and accordingly he shews them what those wages will be when the service is finished. Of the servant of God, *the end*, he says, is everlasting life. The apostle does not use the word wages in *their* case, because that would seem to indicate the reward of *works*, whereas it is the gift of God: but it is the same thought. The apostle is teaching of the *results* of the service of God and of that of sin. The end, he says of the former is everlasting life; and he then refers to that of the service of sin, in the words "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Now it is plain that the most ordinary rules require that "eternal" should be understood to designate the character of the death, as well as of the life of which he is speaking. It is *the end* (21st verse) of the service both of the righteous and the wicked, the

apostle refers to, and we know that to the servant of sin, the wages will be the lake of fire, which is the second death. That death is the wages of sin, the due meed of works done in the flesh.

That the Apostle did not at all refer to the death of the body is evident from two considerations. 1st, That had he done so he would contradict *facts*. He says the Romans had been made *free* from sin—and if so, certainly from its wages—wherefore if the wages of sin be the death of *the body*, the Romans were freed from the death of the body—and that contradicts fact. Both the servant of God and the servant of sin, alike fall under the death of the body, and this proves it was of the second death *alone* he spoke: over the servant of God that death will have no power—over the *rest* it will. 2nd, If the death of the body be the wages of sin, how can God bring men to judgment after death? Wages are *the due* meed—they *fully* repay. If the death of the body be that due meed,—Man is already fully paid at death—and how can God punish again? We may add, that to make the apostle refer to the death of the body in this place, would be to make him contradict the Scriptures also. They distinctly teach that death was laid upon man in order to meet another, and quite different purpose than that of punishment,—which wages, (when spoken of in connection with the wicked,) mean. To Adam personally it was in punishment for his *own* act of disobedience alone. It did not pass as a *punishment* upon others—as we have shewn already:—to say otherwise is to place God in the position of punishing before hand, those who had not been even begotten, when Adam offended—and necessitates the doctrine of imputed sin—a doctrine abhorrent to the letter and spirit of the Scriptures.

Mr. Trotter next speaks of the words, “Satan cometh and findeth nothing in me.” He says, “If Satan could have found in the body of our Lord what Mr. N. asserts was there, our Lord could not have said, “findeth nothing in me.” Nay, in that case Satan would have found all he could desire. He would have found in the body of our Lord a necessity for dying, which would have effectually hindered his voluntarily laying down a life, on which Satan had no claim, on which he had no power—it being impossible he should be holden of it.” (pp. 29, 30.)

Of this passage we may say there was never perhaps a greater failure to understand the nature of truth, nor a greater confounding of things that differ *essentially*. It was written at the first, that Satan *should* bruise the heel of Christ, as the seed of the woman. The words of God to Satan were, “thou shalt bruise his heel;” and he did so. Satan incited men to crucify him, and he was crucified. Satan found Christ in a human body, to which, in respect of Christ, death had been attached for the *very end*, that he might, by tasting of it, effect at once the purposes of redemption; and the destruction of Satan. Satan availed himself of the condition of humanity by which it is subject to death to bruise the heel (the part which has connection with earth) of Christ, and he did bruise it even as had been written of him. What Satan did desire to find in Christ was disobedience, and doubtless it was to drive him into this, that his fearful energies were put forth to the last. In the words, “Satan cometh,” &c., Gethsemane was referred to. That was the final effort of Satan to overcome the constancy of the Redeemer. Had he found anything of his *own* in Christ, he would have overcome him—but *sin* is Satan’s *own*—and as there was no sin in Christ, Satan was himself overcome. It was of *sin alone*

Christ spoke. (see Homilies of the Church, 2nd part of the Sermon on the Misery of Man.)

Mr. Trotter's words, "If Satan could have found in the body of the Lord a necessity for dying, that would have effectually hindered his voluntarily laying down his life," are a mere echo of those of Mr. Darby, which have been met in another place. But let us turn to his total misapprehension of the meaning of the words "to be holden," and to his misapplication of them to the circumstance of the death of Christ.

To *be holden* of any thing intimates an enduring, not a temporary grasp of that thing. All that those words imply is, that it was not possible Christ should be *retained* under death: seeing it had been written of him, "thou wilt not *leave* my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see *corruption*." But that they were never meant to imply that he should not come under the power of death, is contradicted by the very passage from which the words "holden of it," are taken—for they add "Him—ye *have* taken, and—*have* crucified and *slain*." And that he had been *under death*, the verse itself affirms, "Whom God hath *raised up*—having *loosed* the pains of death, because it was not possible he should be *holden* of it." It is scarcely possible to imagine a greater obtuseness or perverseness, than that which would infer from such a verse that Christ had not been under death.

It is in the same spirit of misapprehension he refers to the words, "I lay down my life that I might take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." All that those words express is, that he *willingly* gave up his life. It is not an assertion that he was under no necessity to die, still less do they imply that men were not to be instrumental in taking his life away. To say otherwise is to justify the very principle of Manicheanism, viz. that it never was *really* taken away upon the cross.

The *principle* of this paper is wrong *throughout*. Had Mr. Trotter taken Elihu's place, he would have addressed Job, in this strain. "You are under sufferings. Sufferings are proofs of God's displeasure—of his wrath. Is God angry, except with sin? Does he chasten in hot displeasure, except for departure from himself? If I give you the full benefit of the distinction between '*wrath in chastisement*,' and '*wrath in vengeance*,' of what avail is it? Does wrath of either kind *come on any* except for sin?" Such is Mr. Trotter's, line of argument—and he would have comforted Job, in precisely the same degree as his other friends did. *They* took up that line also—with what truth we all know. "And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him, in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, that feareth God and escheweth evil?" And the accuser did not attempt to deny it. This writer, however, would have shewn Job that he suffered, *not* because it pleased God to *try his servant* by the hand of Satan, but because he was in *sin* and under the displeasure and wrath of God. Job was but a type of Christ, and Plymouth Brethren have learnt absolutely nothing from that book, since they are in as hot pursuit of the very line of proof offered to Job by his three friends, as if that line had not been *already reproved by God*.

"Confession of a verbal error in a Hymn, by James G. Deck."

This error Mr. Deck says occurs in the third line of the following verse.

"Such was thy grace, that for our sake
Thou didst from Heaven come down,
Our *mortal flesh* and blood partake,
In all our misery one."

Mr. Deck is offended at the word *mortal*, as applicable to the flesh of Christ. Had he diligently considered the scriptural meaning of that word, his offence would have vanished: but disregarding the apostle's advice to avoid strifes of mere words, Mr. D. seems to have plunged into all the collections of words he could come at. He has made a point of consulting all the dictionaries within his reach. These are after all but works which profess to give the *various* meanings which are, or *may be* attached to words. They give the ordinary meaning of words, but they also give, and confessedly give, the strained and *not ordinary* meaning which dramatists and poets have been pleased to affix to them. It is therefore a somewhat novel line of theological acumen which would appeal to such publications at all on a point of theology—still more extraordinary is it to take up a dictionary and argue, "This book gives a good meaning and a *bad* one to the same word—now the *bad* one cannot apply to my subject, *therefore* the good one cannot either." Yet that is precisely Mr. Deck's view. His dictionaries all concur to give, *inter alia*, one bad sense to the word *mortal*—whereupon objecting to its applicability to Christ in that *bad* sense, he demurs to use the word *mortal* of the flesh of Christ in *any* sense! But Mr. Deck has not gone to the root of the matter, even in his own novel mode of settling the question. It is derived from *mors*, which signifies death *alone*—and its adjective, of which the English word "mortal" is but a translation, means only "having death attached to it,"—"subjection," that is, "to death." But let us take it in its *worst* sense: viz. "doomed to die"—that may be said of *sinful* flesh, but cannot be said of Christ, because he was under no *doom* whatever—still he had *the flesh* to which death had been attached—which was "subject to death,"—or if *not*, he has *not* died—which is the Manichean result. The Scriptures say, "He became *obedient* to death,"—obedience and subjection are interchangeable. The question which Mr. D. has lost sight of, is one of facts, and not of words. Did Christ partake of *that flesh* of which, *when we speak of it as belonging to the human race*, we say it is mortal—liable to die—subject to death, or doomed to death? If not, of what flesh did he partake? Clearly not of that of the human race!

But this writer has another ground of objection to the doctrine that Christ partook of mortal flesh and blood. He says (page 9,) "Sin and death, or mortality, are always connected together in the word of God,"—and again,— "When the Holy Ghost uses the word 'mortal' in connection with the body, he connects this with sin, either inherent or original." But if this were so, (which it is *not*,) does connection necessarily imply identity? We always associate in our minds, and connect in our speech, a farmer, with husbandry, its cattle or implements; is a farmer therefore a plough or an ox? Mr. Deck, in asserting the *necessary connection* of sin and death, has placed himself between the horns of a dilemma,—for either Christ, in tasting of death, was

sinful, or, not being sinful, he has *not* tasted of death. Mr. Trotter has placed himself in precisely the same predicament; for he says, "How *can* there be liability to *death*, when there is *no sin*, either actual, indwelling, or imputed?" (p. 19, of his Tract.) The passages quoted by Mr. Deck to prove the connection of sin with death, prove no such thing. He confounds the mere juxta-position of words—and argues from it their identity of meaning.

But what after all does Mr. Deck believe concerning the flesh and blood of Christ? He speaks very strongly against its being termed mortal, because that infers sin. That doctrine he "*repudiates and abhors*." (p. 12.) But what does he *not* "*repudiate and abhor*?" Let his own words reply,—“My soul believes and worships when I read ‘the word was made flesh.’” “God sent his own Son in the *likeness* (the italics are *his*) of sinful flesh, and for sin.” “As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise took part in the same.” This is very conclusive. By marking the word "*likeness*" as the emphatic word, he intimates there was no reality in the participation by Christ of the flesh of the human race *generally*, and by the immediately following quotation from Hebrews, Mr. D. intimates his adoption of Mr. Darby's doctrine of "*the children*." The line he has substituted for that which he had originally written in his hymn, corroborates this—for in place of

“Our *mortal* flesh and blood partake,”

he has written,

“Thou didst *our* flesh and blood partake,”

which, when sung by "*the children*," carries its own interpretation.

Finally. If Christ could not partake of *mortal* flesh, because mortality and sin are connected—yet that he *did* partake of that of *the children*—it necessarily follows that the flesh and blood of *the children* cannot be mortal, in the sense of *sinful*—or how could he partake of it.

“The Present Testimony.” No. ix. March, 1851. London: J. K. Campbell, Holborn. Article “The Son of God.” (pp. 179—211.)

The Manichees were, by their view of the identity of sin and mortality, necessarily driven to deny that Christ did really die upon the cross; and in order to account for the opposite statements of the Scriptures, they allowed of an apparent crucifixion of a *seemingly* human body, but declared it to be but an illusion. This precise ground had been arrived at by the writer, whose article is under notice. He is well known as a supporter of the extreme division of the Brethren, and his paper is valuable because it proves to demonstration what results their opinions *must* lead to. The paper under notice is but the natural and inevitable result of the doctrine that Christ was not *liable* to death; for if he was not so, it is not *possible* he can have died.

The writer begins by saying, “I am sure that I dread reasonings where affections should animate us; and the withdrawing from the place of living power, into any thing like a region of notions and theories.” This curious passage does but form a sort of text, upon which his pages are a practical commentary. By “affections” he appears to understand a compound of

fleshly sentimentalism, and shadowy mysticism. It is *this* which he esteems "the place of living power," and it seems not only to give its possessor a light on divine subjects which the Scriptures do *not* give, but also empowers him, where their dicta are against him, either to remodel or set them altogether aside; and to class as mere "reasonings," and "the region of notions and theories," the opinions of those who soberly prefer their express letter. If he seems thus to depreciate adherence to the mere letter of the sacred pages, it is only to pave the way for a fatal departure from both letter and spirit. This object he has veiled under a profusion of sanctimonious expressions, and of earnest solicitude for the glory of God and of Christ. His zeal indeed is so great, as to lead him to the expressed opinion that "little or no mercy" ought to be shewn to such as derogate from that glory: and it is this apparent sincerity, which, while it serves to make the real tendency of his opinions the more hateful, will nevertheless not be without its effect of deceiving those who look at the outside only, and have not been accustomed to weigh all things by "the word" and "by the testimony." "The Son of God" has been made the subject of an article, in two parts. The object of the first of them is to prove that Christ was, "*from eternity, in the bosom of the Father.*" This idea, as it is developed by the writer, seems calculated to sap the very foundations of truth. He does not refer to the many proofs, existing in the Scriptures, that Christ was "personally" God from eternity; *that* then is by no means his object. He notices none of those Scriptures, but *abstracts* a few words—part only of a sentence, from John i. 18,—"*the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,*" in order to make them mean to "the affections," that which they certainly do not convey to the "reason," viz: that the apostle declares the Son's existence in the Father's bosom *alone* from eternity. The verse itself simply states, that since no man had ever seen the Father, but one, it was impossible that any but that one could reveal him; and that one, the apostle says, who is (that is, is *now*) in the bosom of the Father, *hath* declared him. But what is the import of the words "in the bosom of the Father?" Let the Scriptures decide. In John xvi. 28, we find Christ saying, "I leave the world and go unto the Father."—In Acts i. 2, that "going" took place before the eyes of the disciples, and the angels said to them, that he had *gone into heaven*. Next, in Acts iii. 21, we are informed that "the heavens" which have received, are to retain him until the times of restitution. Then in Acts vii. 56, we find Stephen declaring he saw the Son of Man *standing* at the right of God. And finally, in Hebrews x. 12, we read, "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever sat down* at the right of God." From all which, reason, speaking by the framers of certain creeds, affirms that Christ sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

But this is much too matter-of-fact for our author, who is pleased to declare that Christ existed in the Father's bosom, *only* and precisely as a babe is said to be in the bosom of its earthly parent—and this from eternity. We find the author thus stating and answering what appears to have been objected to by some one. "It was asked me, Had the Father *no bosom*, till the babe was born in Bethlehem? Indeed, fully sure I am, as that inquiry suggests (?) he had from all eternity. The bosom of the Father was an eternal habitation, enjoyed by the Son in the ineffable delight of the Father,—'the hiding place of love,' as one has called it, of *inexpressible* love, which is beyond glory; for glory

may be revealed, this cannot." (p. 183.) It is difficult to handle such a subject with delicacy and reverence,—but regard to truth necessitates it. Of *itself* this passage indicates mere fleshly sentimentalism; but taken in connection with his subsequent declarations, it gives colour to the fear that this writer harbours a far deeper evil in his heart. The very question put to him was suggested by analogy of known phenomena, which argue *non-existence* prior to the appearance of those phenomena—and should have awakened the writer to the real tendency of his thoughts. The qualification, too, that Christ had existence *from eternity* in the *Father's bosom*, is afterwards defined to mean "in the God-head,"—an expression which, as this writer uses it, leaves ample room to doubt if he, at the bottom of his heart, believes that there was "one *person* of the Father, *another* of the Son, and *another* of the Holy Ghost," from eternity. These are his words, "The Spirit was given, breathed out, by Jesus risen (John xx). The Holy Ghost then proceeded from him, and in that way became *the Spirit*. But will it be thought that he was not the Spirit in the Godhead before? Never by a saint. And so *the Son*. He was born of the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and so became Son of God; but in like manner shall that affect the thought that he was the Son in the God-head before? (p. 190.) The course of events among the Brethren prove that such statements as these are subsequently taken up and made the basis of further evil. They involve the virtual denial of the personality of the Son and Spirit from eternity; for while there is admission that both were in *the Godhead*, it is also implied that until the Son was born, he was not personally, i. e. had not personal existence as the Son, and until the Holy Ghost was breathed forth, he had not *personal* existence as such—indeed there seems small foundation of *personal* existence in him even now! Coming, as these statements do, from one whose sole object was to represent the crucifixion as illusory and *unreal*, we are warranted in the fear that he conceives of the Son and Spirit, as of a mystic *avatar*—expressing only certain emanations of the *will* of the supreme being, and *nothing more*.

But it is with his thoughts on the crucifixion we have to do, and he has left nothing to conjecture there. He does not, however, come to them at once, but in a very roundabout way. Divested of his very mystic and perplexing oratory, they are to be summed up in few words. He begins thus, "Touching the promised seed of the woman—it was said to the serpent, 'thou shalt bruise his heel.' The death of this seed was thus to be as peculiar as his birth. He was, in birth, to be the woman's seed; in death, he was to have his heel bruised." (p. 193.)

We have here the admission that *death* and the *bruising of the heel*, mean the same thing, and the necessary inference seems to be that in death the bruising of the heel would find its literal accomplishment. But such is not the conclusion he draws from his own premises. He says, "had death, I ask, any title? *None whatever*. Whatever title the everlasting covenant had on his heel, death had none on his flesh and blood." (Ibid.) He does not explain what the heel *was* over which he admits death *had* a title, but denies that the heel meant the flesh and blood of the promised seed. The heel, being that part of man which touches the earth, fitly typified the human body of Christ,—a body which he derived from his mother, (man of the *substance* of his mother,—Athanasian creed,) who derived that substance from Adam, who *was made of the earth*. Wherefore, if bruising that heel imported its *death*,

then surely death *had* a title, even by the very words of the everlasting covenant.

If not, there must indeed be something *peculiar* in those words, and it is this writer's province to unfold that peculiarity, and reconcile these seeming contradictions. He thus proceeds to do it. "In this blessed one, if I may so express it, there was a capability of meeting the divine purpose that his heel should be bruise^d, but there was no exposure to death in any wise." (Ibid.) In other words, it was possible for Christ to meet the divine purpose that his heel should be bruised in death, without being, *in fact*, put to death at all! But can that be his meaning? Is it possible he can mean to prepare us to expect not *literal* fulfilment of the terms of the everlasting covenant of the living God, but some way by which its literal fulfilment may be *evaded* and yet seem to have been a reality! It is even so. He says, "The Jews are again and again charged with being his murderers." Surely they are, and rightly so. We are all in the same condemnation. It is the *guilt* of murder that lies at our door. The Jews took his blood on them and on their children. To all moral intents, and in a full judicial sense, they were "His betrayers and murderers," though it was neither their spear, nor the pressure of the cross, nor the yielding of nature, which took that life away. He gave it up of himself. No man took it from him. He laid it down of himself. (p. 206.)

We have it here plainly stated, that in point of fact, they who actually crucified the Lord, were in no respect *more* guilty of that act, than we, who were not born at the time; and indeed, how could they be so, for if their spear and cross did not take his life away, it is evident they did not put him to death, for he has never suffered death!

That there may be no mistake in this latter point, viz. that the writer does really mean to say he has *not* suffered death, he has twice repeated that his explanation of the mystery is the only way to account for the fact that so much surprised Pilate. It seems Pilate was quite right in supposing it was impossible death *could* have taken place. He says, "Pilate marvelled that he was dead already: he would not believe it; no time had been passed on the cross sufficient to extort life."—"The thought we claim is *thus the only interpreter of the strict literal history of the fact.*" (The italics are his own.)

It needs only to be added, that this doctrine also makes the entire Gospels give false testimony as to the *reality* of the obedience and sufferings of Christ; and in fact it is to destroy the belief in the *real* and *true* humanity of Christ, it has been invented. The ground on which the writer opposes this doctrine is replete with dishonour to God; it is that *true* humanity was *capable* of sinning:—capable of sinning in a higher degree than capable of dying. These words infer *bias* to evil—a bias which falls upon the Creator;—a *doctrine* equal to the worst that has yet been put forth by the worst of infidels.

As we have said before, it was one of the purposes of God in the Incarnation of Christ, to *meet* and refute this horrible dishonour to his name. The real question at issue is whether *true* humanity was capable of *obedience*; and its solution depends *altogether* upon another question, viz., was the humanity of Christ *true* humanity? If it *was*, then he has, to the glory of God's name, evidenced that *true* humanity was capable of obedience. Wherefore, to seek to destroy the testimony to that *true* humanity, is to throw back upon God the reproach of evil angels and evil men, which *can be met only by the fact of the true humanity of Christ.*

In conclusion, let the reader but reflect on the evil tendency of the doctrines which have been presented to his consideration ; let him then reflect what view the Almighty must needs have of them,—the more especially as they have been solemnly put forth as written in express vindication of his glory, and by those who esteem themselves, in an especial manner, *nigh* to him, as his children ; and will he be at all surprised that he has permitted the men who have put them forth, to fall into every sort of reproach ? Is it not rather matter of increased faith in God that he *has* done so ? Does that fact not proclaim the *reality* of the nighness of God in chastisement, upon those who have thus given *occasion* for the blaspheming of his Name ? And what does he say to *them* ? His word is still the same to all his erring ones, “ RETURN UNTO ME, AND I WILL RETURN UNTO YOU.”

S K E T C H

OF THE

PRINCIPLES AND RISE OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.

The fall of any considerable body of Christians has a very evil effect upon all classes of the community.

While the philosopher and mere man of the world regard it with a degree of interest, it is principally because such an event affords them fresh insight into the motives which influence the minds of men. It is *therefore* they delight to trace the steps by which men are led to adopt principles,—to carry them into practice at a considerable cost of self-denial, and perhaps much painful sacrifice, and are nevertheless by-and-bye seen to throw them to the winds, as if they had never been worth a thought! But the interest with which they regard the circumstance itself, is untinged by any shade of sorrow. On the contrary, accustomed to judge by outward results alone, they conclude from the fall of those who have professed to lean upon God and upon His Scriptures, that there is no truth in *the fact* of His support, and are thus fortified in the secret *hope* that the Creator does not concern himself in that which some call *religion*.

And if the Christian regards such an event in a very different light; if he feels a real sorrow at every fresh instance of dishonour done to the name of the Lord, still the failure of a body of sincere Christians is pregnant with evil even towards him. There is in the heart, even of the children of God, a chord which the great enemy of man well knows how to touch; and where the failure of *some* who have attempted it, leads *others* to the conclusion that it is *vain* to seek to embody and carry into practice pure principles of religious truth, the enemy *has* already touched that chord—he *has* reaped the fruit of his labour in overthrowing such a body.

But towards the masses of men, the failure of a body of Christians has an aspect of pure evil alone. It is especially so when that failure has been attended by circumstances of moral obliquity and of indecent violence which even the most illiterate can appreciate in their true character of unmixed evil. The masses *are* (most unfortunately for themselves) in the habit of judging of God's truth rather by its results in those who profess it, than by His own declaration of what those results *ought* to be, and hence the misconduct of Christians has a twofold character for evil—it causes the name of God to be blasphemed; and it tends to harden in the ways of sin, those whom He desires to turn *from sin* by His children's means.

It is therefore ever desirable that when the failure of any considerable body of sincere Christians has become matter of notoriety, a clear and dispassionate

statement of the circumstances should be placed within the reach of all men, that the Christian may comprehend *how* it is that men to whom apparently great light had been given—or at least who have *laid claim* to great light—have been unable to continue in that light: and that the world at large may have an opportunity of judging whether their failure has resulted from the principles by which they professed to be guided; whether those principles had a *necessary tendency* to work out their own ruin,—or whether, and in what degree, the failure of such a body is to be traced to their own flagrant departure from those principles.

The body of Christians called “Plymouth Brethren,” once held a considerable place in the respect of the Christian world. They attained that degree of eminence solely by virtue of certain principles, sealed apparently by the blessing of God! Yet are they at this moment in a state of entire disorganization and hopeless ruin!

Where the parties are God and man, no Christian can doubt upon whom the fault of failure lies—but it is nevertheless desirable to understand *wherein* that fault lies. If that can be ascertained the failure of some may still be a source of strength to others. If we can but discern the hand of God, that is always valuable, though it be in the tempest rather than in the “still small voice” which attracts the believer forth to meet Him. If we can but assign a sufficient reason why the hand of God *should* fall upon a body of Christians, we no longer doubt that the existing disorganization and ruin of such a body is indeed the work of that hand:—and when we feel that He is so very *nigh* to chasten, we have increased joy in perceiving that He is equally *nigh* to sustain those who turn *not* from the truth.

Those who have read the former parts of this work, will be at no loss to conclude that the controversy of God with the Plymouth Brethren has been upon the ground of their *virtual* departure from His cardinal truth concerning the humanity of Christ. They who consider the value which God must needs affix to His own declarations, will easily perceive the *necessary* displeasure with which He *cannot* but regard every attempt, however curiously disguised, to set aside, explain away, or mystify those declarations. The adoption therefore of heretical views on the subject of Christ’s incarnation must be considered as *the cause* of the fall of Brethrenism; and it will remain only to narrate the *mode* in which those heretical views have operated at once to expose them with a blazonry which none can fail to understand, and to bring forth corresponding fruits of unrighteousness and violence which have caused them to be “*consumed one of another.*” (Gal. v. 15.)

It is, however, by *truth alone* that the name of God can be vindicated—and what is the writer’s authority? The writings of the Brethren themselves have furnished him with that authority. It is from their own pages the facts are taken which are adduced in the course of this work—those facts have not been contradicted by themselves. Where reasonings are used, it is in submission to the reader’s judgement whether the inferences drawn are, or are not, just.

The principles of Brethrenism take their rise out of the fact that God does *separate* the believer to *Himself*. Let us consider what this means. The Scriptures affirm that by reason of an inherent principle of evil, every man is naturally averse to thoughts of God, and even to God himself. That averseness is in various parts of the word of God termed “*alienation of*

heart," "blindness," "hatred to light," "love of darkness," and "enmity to God."

When the character and attributes of the Almighty are compared with those attributes of fallen man, it is not difficult to understand why men are said to be "*by nature children of wrath*;" for it is evident that such attributes ascribe to fallen man a state of heart and mind which, as it spontaneously and continually produces fruits of evil, must necessarily (if God be such as the Scriptures declare him) work for him that wrath of God, with which He has determined to visit evil in the day in which He will judge the world.

Such being the state of man by nature;—and it being self-evident that like can only produce like;—that what is born of the flesh *can* be *only* flesh, it follows that, if left to himself, every man would continue even to the end of his course, to hold the character, evince the disposition, and finally meet with the punishment of a child of wrath. There can be no power in any one to renew a right spirit within himself; but on the contrary, the natural disposition of every one could only carry him on in that course of evil, for which the Scriptures declare God will by-and-bye visit men with His eternal anger.

This appalling view of the helpless state in which man is by nature, has been very strongly expressed by the Lord himself in the words, "Except a man be born again, he *cannot* see the kingdom of God;" and in another place it is written, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are *foolishness* unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." These things being so, it follows of course, that one who *does* see the kingdom of God, *is* born again; and he who *does* receive the things of the Spirit of God, he to whom they are no longer foolishness, but who *does* know them, is no longer *natural* but spiritual; that is, such an one must needs have been born again of the Spirit.

And the Scriptures do accordingly ascribe it to the actual and immediate agency of the Holy Ghost that a man is reclaimed from the state in which he was by natural birth. They affirm that it is the Holy Ghost who convinces of sin, and who works faith in Christ, and that it is by that faith a man is said to be "born again." They affirm that the result of faith is, that he who was before "*darkness*," is become a child of "*light*;" he who was before *dead* in sin, is become quickened, and has passed from the state of moral death in which he was born, to the state of *life* eternal; and, finally, that from being by nature a child of wrath he is, by faith, become a *child* of the living God. Thenceforth such an one is able to look forward with *earnest hope* to the resurrection of the *just* (among whom he, as justified by faith, is *one*) and to that future state of blessedness, when "in the ages to come, God will shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness "to believers through Jesus Christ." (Eph. ii. 7.)

Such being a man's renewed state, and renewed objects of hope, there follow also with them new duties and new experiences. "If any man *be* in Christ Jesus, he *is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new!" (2 Cor. v. 17.) If he is "*a child of light*," he is told to walk as a child of light. If he is a son of God, surely God will expect from him the obedience of a son. So that new duties necessarily result from his new position; and these bear upon his walk towards God and towards man.

These new duties are of necessity ; that is they are of *essential* necessity, and do not depend upon the will of man, but spring from the position in which God stands towards the converted one. For if God is holy, it must needs follow that he will *require* of one whom he has brought into fellowship with himself, that he should be holy too. This is not a new principle, but was no less the design of God in Israel of old than it is now ; for it was said to them, "Ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy, and have *severed* you from other people that you should be *mine*." (Lev. xx. 26.) And the believer will not be long before he finds out that this is no imaginary thing, but that on the contrary, he is directly or indirectly always under the *bond fide* action of the power of God, bringing him more and more under the influences and responsibilities of the new position in which he has been placed. The Scriptures present three especial incentives to this practical separateness ; the first is embodied in the words, "I beseech you by *the mercies* of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice ; and that ye be not conformed to this world," &c. (Rom. xii. 1, 2.) The second arises from the exalted nature of the believer's position. He is first told that God's purpose in him is that he should be for an habitation of God through the Spirit, and is then besought to walk worthy of *that* vocation. (Eph. iv. 1, in connection with ii. 22.) The third is the hope of glory which is so to occupy the soul, as to keep it continually set upon things above, and not upon those of the earth.

In reducing these to practice, the believer will find that he is impelled to a constant effort to walk in what the Scriptures term "*the light*," that is, in actual separation from sin ; and *in love*, that is, *in charity* towards all men, but especially towards those who are of the household of faith.

But in the effort to follow out the former of these, the Christian will soon find a necessity, essential to his own peace, of as real a separation as can be, from the pursuits, amusements, and ways of unconverted men, which he will feel to be an atmosphere foreign to that into which his soul has been brought ; and for the same reason he will seek and relish the society and ways of those who are like-minded with himself, and whose pursuits are no longer those of the world at large.

So strongly rooted, however, is the evil principle within a man, that neither the powerful incentives afforded by the Scriptures, nor the impulse of the new nature, will long keep him in the way of truth, unless he has continual recourse to prayer ; not that *of forms* ; but that of earnest laying bare of the heart before God, that he may search and try it, and may himself lead in the way everlasting ; and to this must be added the reading of the Scriptures as the appointed food of the new creature. These two things are as *essential* to the soul as meat and drink are to the body ; and if persevered in, the Christian will feel the *truth* of that promise, that "He who waits upon the Lord shall *renew* his strength," and that the Scriptures will afford him continually renewed light, which will enable him to go on from strength to strength. This course will gradually induce a settled habit of leaning upon God *alone*, that continual exercise of *literal* dependence upon him which the Scriptures term "having the faith and hope in God."

I have before said, that the believer will find himself under the *bond fide* action of God's power. If he has grace to appreciate in any adequate measure the exalted nature of the position in which God has placed him, and has an *honest* desire to yield himself up to him as one that is alive from the dead, he

will discern the action of that power in the felt experience of all that the goodness of God can do for him. He will be under that promise, "If a man will keep my words—my Father will love him—and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) These words imply such abundant revelations of the presence and love of the Father and of the Son, as must needs fill the heart with peace and joy, and compensate for all the hatred and scorn which, in one way or other, a separation from the world is sure to entail upon a man.

But on the other hand, the Christian will find that what God would bear in his state of ignorance, he will not bear in his state of knowledge. God is indeed of exceeding long suffering and patience, and he both will and does bear with much folly, unsteadiness, and sin in his children, while these really proceed from the infirmity of the flesh, which no man can ever succeed in putting down altogether. He will pardon these, and will give, in spite of much infirmity, a continually renewed sense of pardoning love. But if the man falls into any settled, determined course of evil; if he takes any way against God or against his word, a way which evinces a settled *purpose* to disregard him or it; if he says, "I shall have peace *though* I walk after the imagination of my own heart," then he will feel the action of the power of God *against* him; he will find it a *real thing*. If he will walk contrary to God, he will assuredly find that God will walk contrary to him; and the action of his power will be felt in chastisements more or less heavy; and finally, if he hardens himself under these, "the branch that beareth not *fruit*" shall, as the Lord himself has said, "be taken away" *in death*. (John xv. 2.)

Upon the whole, there are three things which are indispensable to the keeping alive of the Christian principle in the heart of the renewed man.

1st. That he should honestly carry out in his own practice, that separation from sin and from the world which God has effected in him, and which it is his design the Christian should *maintain*.

2nd. That seeing the Scriptures are the expression of God's mind in *all things* requisite for his children to know and do, the Christian is both to study and yield implicit obedience to *them*.

3rd. That he should live in the continual exercise of charity (forbearance and kindness) towards all men.

The *result* would necessarily be, in one who did these things, an amount of recommendation of *the truth* to all men, which would *glorify* God; and that is what the Scriptures term "witnessing to the truth; that is *practically*," and according to 1 Peter. ii. 11—16.

But that which the Scriptures represent as God's expectation from an individual, he must necessarily expect from *every* individual. Since *all* who are children of God by faith of Christ have the same *standing* and relation to God, all are necessarily under the same obligation to walk in all the requirements of that position. So far as the Scriptures shew what God requires from any child, every child is under the same absolute necessity to yield obedience thereto. And *that* is the essence of the principle of "Brethrenism."

The Brethren are, or profess to be, a body of converted persons, who have in a greater or less degree, seen the reasonableness of those principles of thought, and who have believed it incumbent upon them to carry them out in practice, as according with the mind of God in the Scriptures.

But they have not stopped there. They have carried their principles to a

point beyond what has been stated above. They have believed that *separation to God* involves more than is comprised in turning away from sin and from the world; and that it calls for and makes *imperative* a separation from every kind of evil, even though it may seem to have the countenance of real Christians. The Brethren have professed to see *evil* (that is, a something which is not agreeable to the mind of God,) in *all* the varied modes in which the several bodies of Protestants meet to worship God. These modes they have called "Systems of Man's devising," meaning thereby that man and not God has set them up. For instance, they see evil in the Established Church, in that they teach theoretically and practically, that baptism is regeneration, whereby the subsequent admission to the Lord's table of the baptised person, though obviously unconverted, is not only sanctioned but rendered imperative. They also object to that Church, the existing evil of the consecration of unconverted men for the ministry. In every other system or denomination of Christians Plymouth Brethren perceive also somewhat of evil; somewhat that is, which has not in their view, the sanction of God's word. They object that each has some particular device set up as a term of communion, which has not the warrant of the Scriptures, and besides this, they have *absolute* objection to the ordination by man, of persons in the place of ministers, which they believe to infer a hindering and limiting of the Spirit of God, who will speak by whom he wills, without any reference or regard to man's appointment.

I have no sort of design to go into a detail of the objections which the Plymouth Brethren have raised against systems; but solely to point out that fact, and to afford a general idea of the nature of the convictions upon which their objections are based. The mere fact that Plymouth Brethren have come out, and formed a body separate from all other systems and denominations, would alone prove that they do condemn all other systems whatever; and that they do claim for themselves to have found a way in which God may be worshipped as he *wills* to be worshipped, as seen in the Scriptures. It is evident then, that the desire of the Plymouth Brethren has been, to go back from the corruptions which man has introduced into Christianity, to those pure and simple observances which obtained in the first days of the faith, when the presence and power of God was more manifestly with the Church than it has since appeared to be. There is certainly primitive simplicity in their thought.

The abstract principle of the Brethren is one; it stands *alone*. "THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE SOLE HEAD AND RULER OF HIS CHURCH."

The practical principles or corollaries, which they have drawn from this, are two in number.

1st. That faith in Christ being the work of the Holy Spirit, by which he actually separates to God those in whom it is found, they who believe are children of God, and have, as such, a right to a place at the Lord's table. Faith is, therefore, their sole term of communion.

2nd. That in meeting for worship, they do so in simple dependence upon the express promise of Christ, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I *in the midst of them*." They accordingly term their assemblies "*meeting around the Lord*."

Connecting the above promise of Christ with his words, "Lo! I am with you, even to the end of the world;" and with the promise of the Holy Spirit

to lead into all truth, Plymouth Brethren have drawn the inference that believers may assuredly depend upon the presence of the Lord, and that of the Holy Spirit at all times and under all circumstances.

As ;—that he will manifest his presence in blessing when they meet ;—that he will raise up men who shall be able to teach, to preach the gospel, and to rule amongst them ;—and that he will, in short, continually afford his help under whatever circumstances might arise, and provide for extraordinary as well as for ordinary contingencies.

These principles are very plain and simple. They are based upon and *suppose* a real and literal belief in the nighness of God to those who fear him. They imply a *taking of God at his word*, and infer, on their part, a determination of heart to lean upon and trust in *God alone*.

There is always beauty in simplicity. The beauty and simplicity of these principles seems to have met with a very wide response in the hearts of the children of God. Gentlemen of rank and fortune—clergymen of the Church of England—ministers of other denominations—persons of every profession, including officers in the navy and army—people, in short, of every sort and of all degrees, seem to have been brought under the power of these principles. They left their former churches, giving up present emolument and all hope of future preferment ; some, emulating the example of Christians of the earliest times, gave largely of their wealth ; others almost impoverished themselves, giving up literally all things for Christ, that they might manifest how truly they believed on him for whom they took this stand before God and before man.

On the other hand, it would appear that God was not wanting on his part, to evince that he could and did approve of the sacrifices his children had made ; he did not, it seems, withhold his testimony to the principles which they had adopted, and which he had enabled them to discern.

This seems to have been shewn in the fact that a very especial outpouring of the Holy Spirit was felt among them. Men whose previous habits and professions would naturally have seemed to shut this door upon them, appear to have been endued with powers to enter upon and teach the deepest truths of God ; powers which, as they could before have laid no claim to them, could only be ascribed to the agency of the Holy Spirit, and might, not unreasonably, be appealed to as the testimony of God to the truth of their principles.

The result has been, on the one hand, of a development of the most blessed truths of the gospel, with a clearness and power little known among other sects or denominations, and is evinced in many of their publications ; and on the other hand, that sure seal of the presence of the power of God—numerous conversions of sinners—appears to have followed this return to a primitive simplicity of reliance upon the power of God.

There does not seem to have been anything of the character of those "*revivals*" which served only to revive shame and reproach, and strengthen the power of Satan, in this action of the truth among the "Brethren." It has not been the short-lived energy of mere fleshly enthusiasm, but has been the gradually increasing development of light and strength spread over years of blessing and peace. It is, I believe, twenty years since these principles began to influence men : and though they have been lost sight of lately, these principles have not lost their truthfulness ; nor have they ceased to influence men. Many still love and cherish them, and if their first power appears no

more, there still remains the truth that He has once owned them, and it is manifest He would do so again, wherever they were held in simple truthfulness and heartfelt reliance upon Him.

The Plymouth Brethren therefore appear to have received as it were the immediate assurance of God that their principles were according to the truth and to Him. That assurance they seem to have received in the shape of increased blessing to their own souls; power in their meetings; growth of grace and knowledge in their flocks: and the seal of God to their labours in fruitful conversion of souls.

It is manifest their position became one of great responsibility before God. Responsibility increases with light. It increases in exact proportion to the light received. So the Lord has said "Unto *whomsoever* much is given, of *him* shall much be required." It appears that the "Brethren" had taken their stand upon the professed belief in the literal Headship and rule of Christ; and that so long as they evinced that belief in practical truth, He did shew Himself to be among them. It is plain that if they came to *practically* cease to regard Him as their head and ruler; if they took any way of their own, apart from Him, and involving a real setting aside of Christ as their sole head and ruler, from that moment their principles would be shivered to fragments; and it would be incumbent upon Him to assert His Headship and rule. It would be so for His own truth's sake, for He has said "Lo! *I am* with you," for blessing if obedient—but *no less* for chastisement if disobedient. And here would come in the application to a *body*, of what has been said of the principle of God's course of action towards an individual.

It could perhaps scarcely be expected but that many of those who would join themselves to the Brethren, would but imperfectly appreciate the fulness of the light and blessing of the principles they had adopted. There might be much ignorance evinced, and occasional actings against those principles. Men might forget, or practically set aside the belief in the presence of the Holy Spirit in their meetings, and give utterance to that which was obviously of their own flesh alone. And so in their mutual relations, love might be lost sight of, and bad feeling arise, &c., &c. But as long as these proceeded only from the infirmity of the flesh, and not from any settled determination to act against the light of principles, the Lord would pardon many such aberrations. And not only so, but if these were made subjects of public prayer and teaching, and of private intercession with the Lord, the Brethren might have expected, and would certainly have found, that His goodness would meet and remove all such hindrances. Besides, it might be reasonably expected that the weight and influence of those whom the Lord had obviously gifted to teach and rule, would be felt and allowed by all. So that ability to meet evil, whether manifested in the shape of prayings and teachings *not* in the spirit, or in any other way, would have been both afforded and supported by the power of the Lord. And under such a course all things might be expected to go on in general peace and blessing.

The reader will be at no loss to perceive that these arguments are based upon the supposal that in taking the stand which the Brethren assumed, there was a real desire in their minds to carry out, in literal simplicity and godly sincerity, that dependence upon the presence and power of God among them which the mere fact of their taking such a stand implies. Credit is given them for a true and sincere design to take Christ for their head and ruler in

reality and simplicity of heart ; and on the other hand, it is supposed that, so long as they did so, they would continue to meet with that sustainment from Him which they appear to have experienced at the first.

But, on the other hand, it is no less manifest, that the moment they wilfully departed from their principles ; that is, the moment they *determinedly* acted in violation of them, they would lose that sustainment, and would just sink down to the level of other supporters of mere system. Their system might, *to the eye*, seem more pure and simple than others, but it would be *only* to the eye. It would not *in reality* be one whit better than any other system, because lacking (as having *lost*) *the power* which can alone give *life* to any system whatever. A sort of converse line of argument will be found of very truthful application here. As that, " 1st. If to their adherence to principles the support of the Lord had been *consequently* attached, *then* the loss of that support would *necessarily* infer *departure* from principles. 2nd. If union and blessing had *resulted* from the active presence of principles ; *then* disunion and absence of blessing would *necessarily* infer the *absence* of the active power of principles. 3rd. The truthfulness (as according with the mind of God in the Scriptures) of the principles of Brethrenism may be seen *alike* from the presence of the Lord's power among them while Brethren were faithful to principles, and from the *withdrawal* of that power when unfaithful : for his accordance of that support infers approval, and his withdrawing it because of *departure*, alike show his approbation of the principles themselves."

I have no design to trace in detail the steps by which the Brethren progressed until they had reached their zenith. But rather to take them up at that point, and shew by what means they appear to have declined from it. That zenith was *real* : and not fictitious or imaginary. Its proofs remain in their literature ; and will remain, so long as simple, yet powerful, expositions of the word of God shall be valued by his children. Its proofs remain and will remain throughout the ages of eternity, in the personal presence in glory, of souls converted by their means.

PART II.

FALL OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.

I take the Brethren up at their zenith with the object of pointing out the leading circumstances which have conduced to their fall, in order that these may be as a beacon of instruction and warning to Christians at large, as well as to those who may still hold to their principles, or may be hereafter induced to embrace them. Before proceeding to detail those circumstances, it seems needful to advert to a point which would require great foresight at the outset, and afterwards the continual presence of watchful care ; especially on the part of the leaders among the Brethren. By leaders, I mean, those whom it was obvious *the Lord* had raised, and to whom *he* had given weight and influence, from whatever cause.

That point is, the guarding against a creeping in of the selfish principle, whether in the masses or in the leaders themselves.

1st. In the masses.

It will probably appear to most Christians, as well as to the mere general reader ; to all, indeed, who have not given their minds to any very acute consideration of the subject, that in reducing their principles to *practice*, "Brethrenism" would be found to result in a sort of religious republicanism. But a little consideration will show that it is not so, and that if ever it became so, it could be only owing to departure from principles and not arising out of them.

Their principle supposes, not a nominal, but a real headship of Christ. That headship would be *bonâ fide* so long, and only so long, as the Scriptures formed, in all things, the rule of their guidance, as being the expression of the mind of God. If cases arose not explicitly provided for therein, then recourse to prayer and to a line of action in accordance with the general spirit of the Scriptures, would form a *bonâ fide* following of Christ as their Head and Ruler ; and doubtless such a course would have not only commended itself to the hearts and consciences of Brethren at large as according with and carrying out the idea of real and literal subjection to the headship of Christ, but would also have drawn down a real guidance from him.

Yet it must be allowed there was great danger here ; a danger which could only be met by implicit reliance upon the help of the Lord. Doubtless many of those who would adopt the general idea of dependence upon the personal headship and rule of Christ, would be unable to comprehend how it was to be reduced to practice ; how it was to work as a real and literal fact. And such persons, if not watched over and instructed, would evince a continual disposition to slide away from a real, to a merely nominal recognition of his headship and rule ; they might retain the profession of it, but set it aside in practice.

Now there is in the heart of man, a desire to be independent, but it does not stop *there*. There is not merely the wish to be above control, but along with it there is *always* a secret, though unacknowledged, and perhaps disavowed, but yet a *real, existing* desire to influence and control the minds of others. No one who has read the history of mankind to any purpose, can have failed to see that even the most ultra pretenders to liberality of sentiment, the most violent declaimers in favour of liberty mean, in truth, and have always in the end, shewn that they have meant in truth, liberty to do their *own* will ; and the most plausible preachers of equality have ever, in the end, shewn that they have meant *first*, the bringing of others down to their own level, and *secondly*, the ultimate exaltation of themselves above the level of both liberty and equality. The fall of man arose from giving the reins to this same selfish principle, the desire to be "as Gods," though against the will of God himself." It has never ceased to animate the bosom of men since the fall. However disguised, it is still there. Infinite and opposite are its early buddings ; even "*humility*" (as a prophet of the world has said) "is young ambition's lowly ladder." There is deep truth in that.

This should have been remembered. Brethren should have watched against its appearance. Their "*open ministry*," was evidently the chief field in which the selfish principle would show itself. It was in that field most dishonour might be done to their principles and to God. Open ministry supposes vacancies to be filled up by God ; not an arena wherein the fleshly desires for distinction might have free course.

Brethren should therefore have fearlessly impressed their flocks with the

true nature of the principles of ministry. They should have stated them clearly to each new member, as he was admitted amongst them ; and they should, from time to time, have made their principles subject of instruction and exhortation to all. They should have looked to the Lord in this ; disregarding any evil ascriptions upon their motives. Such would doubtless arise, but the Lord could and would have met all that. He would have made them victorious, and the great body of the flock joyfully acquiescent in a strict discipline, which would protect them from exhibitions in prayer and teaching, no less dishonouring to God in virtually denying the presence of the Spirit, than painful to the hearers. The leaders should, therefore, have been careful to *insist* upon the real and *bona fide* headship of Christ. They should have taught and *insisted* upon the essential distinction between that gift of the grace of God, by which a man is converted, and that *diversity of gifts* by which the Holy Spirit enables one to pray and speak to public edification.

But instead of watching against the creeping in of republican sentiments and actings ; instead of keeping closely shut the door by which the outward resemblance of their principles to those of republicanism, might be turned into a literal and real republicanism, they seem to have acted on principles tending to awaken such thoughts where they were dormant, or to foster them where they already existed. In many instances there was a forwardness to engender, in the lower classes, a false notion of the relation in which they stood as Brethren. There were efforts which seemed more to *urge*, than to tacitly admit, them to assume a place of equality, not only as Christians, but as *men*. There was an *ostentation* in gentlemen taking a lower rank,—they ostentatiously walked in public streets, arm in arm with the poorest labourers. Now this was *essentially* wrong. If the Scriptures bid “each esteem other more highly than himself,” it is a rule of universal application ; and its faithful observance would keep every man in the place in which God had called him. It is a positive precept, “Render, therefore, to all their dues ; honour to whom honour.” (Rom. xiii. 7.) Its spirit is anything but *levelling*. If it became the gentleman to humble himself, still more did it become the groom to do so. Very little reflection will show that these principles would operate to keep alive harmony, without any tendency to induce one to tread upon the heels of another. Any effort to efface the means by which order is kept in the world, can only eventuate in disorder. Differences of rank, as well as “the powers that be,” are “ordained of God.” (Rom xiii. 1.)

The natural result of such proceedings is to induce men to step out of their own place, and to imagine themselves, *because* Christians, therefore on a footing of the most perfect equality with their superiors in rank, station and education ; and not only so, but it would eventuate in the notion that oneness of standing before God in Christ implied also equality of spiritual gifts. Thus, not merely denying and setting aside the positive doctrine of *diversity of gifts*, but engendering in the most illiterate a forward presumption of tone, in judging of matters wholly beyond their comprehension.*

* Note.—A very curious case has been placed at my disposal. It occurred in one of the many meetings whose object was to procure, by *any* means, the condemnation of Mr. Newton's writings. On this occasion, a gentleman, a man of education, arose, and declared he had read the papers in question several times, in the express desire to find out what was objectionable, and could *not do so* ; but that subsequently the false doctrine which they contained was pointed out to him by two persons in the *lowest rank in life*.

This was to sow seeds of evil. So long as there was in the body at large, a faithfulness of heart to the Lord, and a real acting out of their principles, it might indeed be expected of his goodness that he would hinder those seeds from bearing any great fruit of evil. He would keep down those manifestations which mere simplicity of heart, and desire to please him, had led his children to sow ignorantly. But their evil effect would not fail to have fruition, and be felt, if ever there was a departure from those principles, whose observance empowered the Lord to keep the evil in check. Brethren would reap the fruit of their mistake, as soon as the power and presence of the Lord, being virtually set aside by *them*, was, by *him* practically withdrawn.

And then the working of the selfish principle, thus fostered and sown, would be felt. It would evidence itself in the desire to *effectuate*—to *realize* equality. They who desire to exalt themselves would feel there could be no real equality, while confronted by talent and education, and there would arise a disposition to slight, discredit, vilify, and by *any means* get rid of those who were felt to be *in the way*. Does the reader exclaim, “But what sort of Christianity does all this suppose?” Let him reflect for one moment. Let him test *by the word of God* the question “What are Christians?” He will, alas, find it but too true that they are

EVIL BEINGS, OVER WHOM TRUTH HAS, MORE OR LESS, BUT NEVER PERFECT INFLUENCE.

I notice only one form in which this principle has shown itself. I do so to expose the total ignorance of the principle evinced. It found vent in such expressions as these: “*One man ministry*,” “Setting up of man,” and the like. It assumed to be an adherence to the principles of Brethrenism,—while it, in fact, derided them; and an assertion of the sole headship of Christ, which it, in fact, literally denied. For if he was their head and ruler, and cared for them as such; yet evinced his care in providing only *one* in a gathering able to minister to that gathering; then *that* was the expression of his will, and it should have been submitted to *as such*. Surely he was able to give power to others, but if it did not please him to do so, it was still *his* pleasure, and to sneer at the circumstance, or at those who acquiesced in the circumstance, was to sneer at their principles and at their head.

To resume. Nothing but a *rigid* and faithful acting out of the principles they recognized as according to God, an acting as *to the Lord* and *not* to man, could prevent Brethrenism from falling into rank republicanism; and then, as in all other republics, it would not be long before the most ignorant and the most unscrupulous would be found in the ascendant; occupying, *in fact*, the place of him who alone can keep men's hearts in peaceful subjection.

2ndly. There would be danger lest the leaders themselves should be carried away by the selfish principle.

The danger here, would lie in a tendency entirely opposite to that which has been adverted to, but which is found, notwithstanding, to co-exist in the mass of contradictions called man. If the principle of selfishness often takes the

That the evil effect of such statements as that might be *forced* upon his view; ~~and~~ then arose in that assembly,—a man in the humblest walk of life: he declared ~~that he too~~ had found out the error *himself*. This drew forth a series of home questions from a tradesman in the town, and the man was *obliged to confess* that the error had ~~not~~ been seen by him until it had been pointed out. The man had been detected in a ~~lie~~,—but *not one word of reproof came from the lips of any one in all that assembly.*

form of mere desire to exalt *self*, it is no less found taking that of exalting *others* beyond measure. Each of these, is but an opposite manifestation of the same root of evil. Both take rise in, and both terminate in, one and the same thing; that is, a virtual declining to lean *immediately* upon God. Either mode of manifestation necessarily infers a falling away from the principle which affirms Christ to be the alone head of his children.

Mankind may be divided into two general classes, the turbulent and the pacific. The former of these is that class from which the *active* pursuit of equality is seen to emanate; while the latter, and by far larger class, are those who are found to acquiesce in the rule of one man, or in a settled form of government. It is, even in these last, but still a variety of the selfish principle. The thing desired is peace and refuge under the settled shelter of others, though dignified by the name of love or order; but in affairs of this world we know it results in a line which is consonant with the will of him by whom kings reign.

In religion, however, it is a very different thing. God has separated his children to *himself*; and is *necessarily* the sole king and ruler of those whom he has thus separated; therefore to seek another head than him, is virtually to reject God. The eighth chapter of the first book of Samuel, shews God's mind on that point; and where any have acknowledged and felt the fact of their separation to him, and have afterwards erected to themselves *other* leaders, assigning to them that power over their minds and consciences which he alone *ought* to have, they will not be long in experiencing the evils of such a course. In the individual it originates in mere love of ease, and will invariably end in deadness of heart towards God.

Now the very essence of their principles supposes that each individual desires to be found in habitual exercise, that is, in *practical* recognition of dependence upon Christ *alone*; and that each would be carrying on a continually-increasing perception and realization of that truth, in his own felt separation from dependence upon man, to that upon God. But there is a tendency to the love of ease, even in those really devoted to God. It is a subtle thing, and easily commends itself in one way or other, even to the understanding and conscience. It evinces itself in a growing tendency to lean upon ordinances, and upon man's ministry, that these may make up for, or supply that which a man should work out by his own energy of walk with God. If not watched against, a man would find himself by degrees putting attendance upon ordinances, and a deep exercise of soul in them, into the place of that individual exercise of daily and hourly self-sacrifice and dependence upon God, which the Scriptures describe as "having the faith and hope," in habitual and fervid exercise, "in God."

A great majority of Christians will be found to come under this description. Many whose daily cares require very great attention, think themselves almost necessarily driven into this class; while others would belong to it because of mere love of ease: for it is a sad truth that *not all* who are called, are induced to give themselves up in heart and soul to the leadings of the Spirit of God. Indeed those who do not, will be always found a large majority, and in exact proportion to their private negligence, they will appear to set an inordinately high value upon public ministrations. They will regard, with a higher respect than there is need for, or is right, the power and talent of those whose gifts

minister to them from time to time, that refreshment which ought rather to result from their own diligence.

To those whose minds are in constant exercise, as before God, public ministrations, if in the power of the Spirit, will be highly prized as helping on and building up ; but to the less diligent those occasions would be more as the food of life,—their almost only food : and hence would arise a disposition to give an *undue place* to public ministrations, and to assign a too high value to *him* who ministered.

Perhaps it could scarcely be expected but that some one or more of those especially and eminently gifted to minister, would in process of time be in a position to take advantage of such a state of things, should any circumstances occur to offer an inducement to do so.

It is evident they might attain to the power, and that such a conjuncture might arise, and it would depend entirely upon the sincerity of the man's devotion to the *service of God*, whether he fell into the snare or not. If he was, in heartfelt simplicity, looking only to the glory of God ; to the building up of his children ; to the development of the truth as it is explicitly borne upon the face of the Scriptures, God would be with him, and would sustain him under all the trying and tempting circumstances of the position into which he had brought him. But, on the other hand, if such a one departed in any thing from God ; if, leaving the simple truths of the Scriptures, he became entangled in any views *not* plainly revealed therein ; if he was found advocating *them*, rather than the doctrine which is according to godliness, he would be in a position of great peril. God *can* only be on the side of what he has revealed ; and if a man was found to persist in any view which God had not *manifestly* revealed, *he* could not go along with that man. He would be in contest with God, for anything *not* revealed is against truth ; it is written that a man must no more *add to*, than *take away* from God's word ; and that man *must* ultimately fall, who takes a part against, or not in conformity with, the mind of God.

It is manifest that any man who should wilfully take advantage of the influence which God had given to him for *his* glory, to turn it into an occasion to carry out his own views, would not only offend deeply, but would be the occasion of offence in others. He who assumed a lead, and they who followed that lead, would, *ipso facto*, equally depart from a principle which affirms Christ to be *sole* leader of his children. There would be need of exceeding watchfulness on the part both of the leaders and of the flock. On the part of the former, a readiness to sacrifice self to the service of God ; and on the part of the flocks, a readiness to sacrifice *the leaders*, if needful to the preserving of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

I shall now proceed to detail the actual circumstances which have conduced to the present state of disorganization and ruin in which "Brethrenism" is found. In doing so, I shall not narrate trifling circumstances, or any circumstances whatever which would serve only to confuse the simple chain of events which has ended in the actual state of things amongst the Brethren. One who desires to have a full view of these things, may be referred to a pamphlet, entitled "Retrospect of Events that have taken place amongst the Brethren,"—London : Benjamin L. Green, 62, Paternoster Row, 6d. And its *important* Appendix, price 4d. A most masterly paper, in which will be *found a detail*, written with a clearness and power at once baffling imitation,

and rendering it needless, in presence of such a document. Also, "Three Letters to the Author of the Retrospect," should be got. They are to be had of the same publisher, and explain some errors or inadvertencies into which the former writer is said to have fallen, and besides, contain much additional light on the whole subject. These two publications will give full information, up to the date of their appearance.

In process of time public opinion among the Brethren seemed to centre around the persons and views of two of their leaders, Messrs. Newton and Darby. I shall not touch upon smaller matters, nor desire to insinuate there was any jealousy between them. I have no proof of it; neither, if I had, would it serve to account for the disruption of Brethrenism which has taken place by their means. It will be evident that no mere jealousy, however acutely felt, could be made a ground of schism. It might exist, as a moving cause, but *alone* it could not, between gifted men, bring about an open rupture. There would be the need of some substantive point of difference in doctrine or in views, which might be, as it were, the field in which their jealousy, if it existed, could be fought to extremities. I do not desire to insinuate there was any such feeling; there is no need of it. But that of which there does exist substantive proof is that each of these leaders took opposing views on the subject of prophecy. And this *leads* to (but is not *in fact*,) the very essence of all that has befallen "Brethrenism."

It would avail nothing to narrate the points in which they are agreed. The true point would obviously lie in that wherein they differ. And of this I shall endeavour to give a succinct view, for it is absolutely necessary to the understanding of the question.

The great body of the Brethren seem to consider that the present dispensation will be brought to a close by the second coming of Christ, at a time when the man of sin, or Antichrist, shall reign upon the earth, and be worshipped as God. The grounds of this belief will be found chiefly in 1 Thess. iv. 13, 18, and v. 1, 4; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 12; and in Rev. xiii. xvi. xvii. and xix.

But here is the point of departure of Messrs. N. and D. from one another. Mr. Newton infers, both from the general tenor of the Scriptures, and from particular passages, which seem absolutely to *necessitate* the conclusion, that Christians will be upon the earth, and suffering under the persecutions which Antichrist will institute; and that those Christians will not be taken from the earth, until Christ "shall himself descend with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." (1 Thess. iv. 16.) That is, Christians will not be "caught up," until a very short time before the actual descent of Christ to execute judgment upon the man of sin and his followers.

Mr. Darby teaches, on the contrary, that Christians will not be upon the earth at that time, to suffer from those persecutions, but will have been removed from it long before: and not only so, but that the coming of Christ is to be looked for, *by the saints*, daily; that is, any day. He may come to-day or to-morrow. And this doctrine is called "*The Rapture of the Saints*."

Before giving a short analysis of the objections against this view, I would notice *two* which occur in the very mention of it. One can scarcely read such thoughts without feeling that their *secret* tendency is to *remove fear* from the mind. The Scriptures say, men must work out their salvation with *fear* and *trembling*, but this view seems to say "sleep on, for no evil shall befall you."

This has been foreseen, and they have endeavoured to meet it, by affirming that this view will breed the habitual watchfulness of men "in hourly expectation of their Lord." An affirmation in more direct contradiction to the analogy and experience of thousands of years, cannot well be imagined. Every man *knows* that the morn of each day *may* be the last which he will see dawn; but has that knowledge *ever* yet had anything like an adequate effect upon his mind during the day? It would be folly to aver that it has. A man knows *that fact* has been a possibility in the same degree in which it is so *to-day*, every day of his past life,—and *may* continue still an uncertain possibility, for the next twenty years; and the *result* is, practical *disregard* to it, as a fact. So of the "*Rapture of the Saints*,"—if this doctrine of Mr. Darby's *be true*, it must have been *equally true* for the last 1800 years, and it may still continue an *uncertain possibility*, for the whole term of any man's life. Its effect will be *equally* and *certainly*, to work practical *disregard* to the coming of the Lord as a *fact*.

But there is another *prima facie* objection to this view, very fearful to contemplate. Let us suppose Mr. Darby's view to be *wrong*; to be, in fact, a misrepresentation of the purposes of God: but that it *prevailed* and was received for truth by Christians in general. What then would be the result when Antichrist came, and began to persecute, kill and destroy, as it is written he shall do to *every one* who will not worship him? What effect would this have upon men who have been taught to regard as *God's truth*, that none of those things should touch *them*? *Without doubt*, consternation, unbelief, and apostacy would follow. A state of things so wholly unlooked for, would uproot all confidence in the Scriptures themselves, or in the *possibility* to understand them.

Now, be it remarked, no such evil can, by possibility, arise from the view of Mr. Newton *eventually* proving erroneous. His view says to every man "watch and pray always that ye may be accounted *worthy to escape* all these things that shall come to pass." (Luke xxi. 36.) A line of impression in perfect accordance with the general tenor of the Scriptures, and which would be found to operate in keeping men *prepared* to expect evil, which would therefore not take them by surprise. Not *shake*, but strengthen their belief and confidence in the Scriptures, if the persecution came; whereas, if it came *not* they would at the least have got no harm, but the reverse, from its anticipation.

But the question itself is a very simple one, and may be dealt with in a very simple and summary manner. It is evidently a kind of "*see-saw*;" the truth lies in one of two opposite scales. In proportion as the probabilities against the truth of one view accumulate, it will descend in the scale, and the probabilities in favour of the other, and opposite view, will necessarily rise. For there can be no *medium* between yes and no, in such a case. There will be Christians on the earth, or there will not be. One of these views is truth, the other *necessarily* falsehood.

Now against the probability of Mr. Darby's view being right, the following circumstances have great weight. Let the reader consider them.

1st. It has not the support of one single writer from the days of the Apostles until now. For 1800 years this view was unheard of.

2nd. It is unsupported by one single passage of Scripture taken in connection with what precedes and follows it.

3rd. It is not the *plain* and *obvious* teaching of any one passage or text in Scripture, *taken out* of its connection with what precedes and follows it.

4th. It positively and flatly contradicts multifarious Scripture passages and texts, taken with or without reference to their context ; and it *necessitates* the setting aside, and explaining away, of many passages which either positively affirm, or else obviously suppose the existence of Christians upon the earth during the last persecutions.

5th. It necessitates (it has forced the supporters of this view to do so) the entire setting aside of the obvious and plain meaning of those chapters in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, wherein the second coming of the Lord is spoken of ; and it necessitates (for it has done so) the remodelling of the plain and obvious teaching of those Epistles, with a view to engraft upon them a meaning which they have never heretofore been understood to convey ; and which, without such remodelling, they never would have been understood to convey.

6th. It necessitates men to receive for truth, the monstrous absurdity that (since there are to be no Christians upon the earth) *either* the directions and encouragements which seem obviously addressed in the Scriptures to some who will be upon the earth suffering under persecution, and who are to be " caught up," when the Lord comes, were given to the idle winds, and will be of none effect ; *or*, that a class of persons will exist, at that time, who will be found with the Christian Scriptures in their hands ; deriving their sole comfort from them. Yielding obedience to them, even unto death ; having, it is explicitly said, " the testimony of Jesus," and who will (the survivors of them,) be caught up to meet the Lord in the air ; and who, notwithstanding, are not Christians ; that is, *not* BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.

The cumulative force of these objections to the probable truth of Mr. Darby's views, sinks them to the earth, as neither consistent with the Scriptures themselves, nor with the doctrine which is according to godliness.

On the other hand, and necessarily, for there can be no medium, the probabilities in favour of Mr. Newton's view rise, and rise to certainty.

It may be added, in justice to that gentleman, and with perfect truthfulness, as to fact, that Mr. Newton's view requires no forced interpretation of the words of Scripture, but, on the contrary, is based upon the principle that the Scriptures are to be taken in their plain and obvious meaning ; and it claims to be received only so far as it is found to consist with the plain and obvious meaning of revealed truth.

I have been led into an examination of these views, *solely* because they give *the clue* to the schism between the Brethren, as will be seen more fully by and bye.

Plymouth Brethren were divided in opinion upon the merits of these views ; perhaps the greater number received Mr. Darby's system, but they had come to no open rupture on the subject. To give an idea of the state of feeling which existed, previously to the actual rupture, I quote from the "*Retrospect*." " Mr. Newton earnestly denied the ' secret rapture of the saints,' he denied the corollaries fairly to be deduced, so he said, from the opinions of Mr. Darby's school ; and Mr. Darby detected a whole nest of errors and unsound statements in Mr. Newton's prophetic scheme. In the mean time Mr. Newton's school was continually on the increase, and disciples were added to

him daily." This state of things continued for some time. The rupture itself, followed upon "the increase of Mr. Newton's school," and is thus related. "The stir becoming general, Mr. Darby, who was then on the continent, was invited to come to Plymouth, by some who did not approve of the progress of events there. The first grave fact that resulted from the collision of the chief antagonists, and this collision was formidable, was an open separation and schism in the body. A second table was spread (by Mr. Darby,) at Plymouth; the *one* body became *two*." (Retrospect, page 7.)

This act of schism was the alone work of Mr. Darby. He, and those who followed his lead, were by this very act placed in circumstances of great peril before God. God had been openly disregarded and set aside by this act of *division*. The Scriptures (Rom. xvi. 17, 18) have pointedly commanded the children of God, to mark them which cause divisions, and to *avoid* them. Now Mr. Darby had taken this very place,—he had caused a division. Brethren ought, in faithfulness to God, if they really believed in his rule, to have avoided Mr. Darby. They ought to have believed God's word in the 18th verse, that he who causes divisions serves not the Lord Jesus Christ, but his own belly. A literal belief that God means what he says would have stood Brethren in great stead.

Those who, on the contrary, adhered to Mr. Darby and separated with him, were in open disregard of that injunction of God. They were in literal and manifest opposition to him, and had set aside the headship of Christ for that of Mr. Darby.

"The two parties were," so says the Retrospect, "now arranged against one another in irreconcilable hostility." The author (Dr. Tregelles) of the "Three Letters" denies this, and affirms that the hostility was all on one side, and facts have placed this beyond dispute. Every act of indecent violence (and there have been many in word and deed) has proceeded wholly from Mr. Newton's opponents. He does not appear to have been *once* betrayed into it. It is clear there needed only some breeze to fan this state of things into a flame which would, in the end, consume the party which had arrayed itself in opposition to their principles, and therefore, to him who had sanctioned those principles with his approval. Occasion to widen a breach is soon found where the desire to seek one exists. "Where envying and strife is, there is (of necessity) confusion and every evil work." (James iii. 16.) Mr. Darby was now in the *bond fide* position of head of a party. His next object would naturally be to divide as many as possible with himself. This he endeavoured to do by suddenly adopting opinions on the subject of ministry, the reverse of those which he had held before. The selection of this subject was to draw the passions of men into the contest; and the side he now took was calculated to range with him all those who desired self-gratification—personal distinction, *in the field of open ministry*, hitherto kept closely shut to all who were not *obviously* qualified to teach, &c.—qualified that is, by *the Lord*, as *evidenced in their power*.

It was a principle of the Brethren that God alone could raise up men able to minister; and hitherto Mr. Darby had been fully participant in that principle. He had (Three Letters, p. 6) actually been present when *unauthorized ministry* had been publicly *stopped*, and that act had his *full concurrence*; and he left Plymouth *because* the power to stop such ministrations was not sufficiently recognized. Mr. Darby had "for years sanctioned Mr. Newton's

views on ministry," (page 7) and had, therefore, fully shared in the odium naturally resulting from that line of thought and proceeding. But now (after the rupture) he turned round and charged it *as an evil* against Mr. Newton.

The effect of this course would necessarily be to throw upon Mr. Newton alone the whole odium of that proceeding. It was to create a prejudice against him, and against his "*school*" among the ignorant—that is, the great majority—to divide them away from Mr. Newton as the opposer of *liberty* of ministry; as the one who desired to introduce system, against Brethren principles. Mr. Darby's object was to connect together Mr. Newton's person and his system; to make them appear inseparable, and both alike hateful to the ignorant majority. His object was to shuffle together, to confound together Mr. Newton's views on ministry with his views on prophecy, that the ignorant might not be able to separate between them, but might be led to reject *both together*; and these were so fixed to the idea of the man, that he was necessarily held up as one to be hated and avoided. Mr. Darby succeeded in a great measure, and for some time ministry, in connection with Mr. Newton, alone took up the attention of the masses. We shall soon see how Mr. Darby adopted exactly the same course with the next subject which came into his power. In the meanwhile he was looked upon as the favourer of open, unrestricted *freedom of ministry*, and thus threw open the door to the opinion that *mere christianity* and *power of ministry* were one and the same thing. In this Mr. Darby took another step away from the Scriptures of God. But the course was calculated to win opinions to himself, and to his views, and no less to make the person and views of his opponent hateful.

The next and final subject of difference, I take from the clear and truthful statements of the "*Retrospect*."

About eighteen months before the fact now related, Mr. Newton had been lecturing upon the Psalms. A young lady had made notes of what she understood to have fallen from him when speaking on the sixth Psalm. They were in manuscript, and she lent them to her friends. This paper (so says the Retrospect) fell into the hands of Mr. M'Adam (one of Mr. Darby's adherents) who published them at Exeter, "though without the knowledge of Mr. Newton, or without inquiring if the lecture really contained his sentiments" (page 16). Mr. Harris (a former friend of Mr. Newton, and a fellow-labourer once, but since *gone over* to Mr. Darby) "drew the attention of the Brethren to the questionable doctrines of Mr. Newton, by publishing strictures" upon the notes thus dishonestly given to the world. Mr. Harris did this without once referring to his former friend and fellow-labourer, without first asking him whether the "questionable doctrine" he was about to hold up to reprobation, had Mr. Newton's *sanction* or not; and without giving him any benefit from the *natural* supposition that it was *just possible* the note taker might have erred.

Moderate language would fail to convey a deserved measure of censure upon the deeds of these two men. Let them be left to God.

Mr. Trotter has said, with reference to the effect produced by the publication of the Notes and Strictures of Mr. Harris, "The horror which was caused in the souls of many by these Notes, led Mr. Newton to publish his two tracts '*Remarks*' and '*Observations*.'" (What are Mr. Newton's present Doctrines? page 9.)

Such is Mr. Trotter's account. One more in accordance with truth would

have likened the state of feeling excited "*in the souls of many*" by the publication of the Notes and Strictures, to the opening cry of a pack of hounds—hitherto expectant—but *now*, at length, with the quarry unkenelled and in full view. It was the joy of men who had longed for an occasion which now seemed to present itself, for the destruction of one whom they had as yet been unable to *utterly* ruin. In using such language I do it advisedly, being fully borne out by the facts of the case, which have, with a loud and clear voice, proclaimed that hatred to the man and to his prophetic views was the alone source of the (joyful) "horror" of which Mr. Trotter speaks. But I ascribe this feeling to one party or division alone. To those alone that is, who held, not merely Mr. Darby's prophetic, but *also* his doctrinal views—of which more anon.

For a time all attention centred in this new difference. It will be seen from Mr. Trotter's words, that Mr. Newton was no volunteer of new doctrines on the Humanity of the Lord. He was no setter forth of new opinions, but was driven, in self-defence alone, to write the tracts called "Remarks" and "Observations." In those tracts he has stated his views with the utmost openness and sincerity and with childlike simplicity and integrity. He was aided, in the first of those papers by some brethren who then adhered to him, but who have since made the very statements they approved of before they were published, ground of excommunicating the writer! They were carried away by the flood of ungodly violence which soon set in.

The confusion increased a thousand-fold. Mr. Darby and his followers took advantage of it *exactly as before*. Throwing into this new stream the whole of Mr. Newton's views, they endeavoured to confound and swamp them *all together*.

The Brethren were generally carried away by the violence of Mr. Darby and his adherents. They had *lost sight of the fact*, that they who assailed Mr. Newton were *already* in open departure from their principles, and from God, and that they had *thereby lost all right* to be attended to by those who adhered to principles; and that all they said, *if* attended to at all, should have been viewed with an eye of jealous care, because proceeding from open and avowed enemies to him whom they assailed. The injunction of God is that causers of division are to be *avoided*. Brethren acted as if it had been written "attend to and follow after them." They received and read epistles from the chief cause of this schism—permitting him to prescribe "*from without*" what were the terms on which *he* would *break bread* with such and such gatherings; whereas, it was *they* who were in position to prescribe the terms upon which alone they could re-admit him to fellowship; viz., repentance and forsaking the sin in which he was.

They were carried away by violence, and not only so, but they found excuse for that violence. They said Luther was a violent man! In this they forgot that violence was *a blot*—the almost sole blot—upon Luther, but it is the uniform *characteristic* of evil men. Has then God *lied* when he said "the wrath of man worketh *not* the righteousness of God?" Brethren acted as if it was even so! God did not know!—He could not have foreseen such a case as this!—That word could not apply here!—And so the very violence that ought to have warned them that he who evinced it was *not* working the righteousness of God, was turned by them into a proof, that *evenly* Mr. Darby and his followers in violence *were* working the righteousness of God! A belief that God *means* what he says, would have stood the Brethren in great *stead here*.

When Mr. Newton was supposed to have been ruined ; when all had been separated from him that could be separated ; *then* Mr. Darby and his adherents began the endeavour to profit by the blow which had been struck. The Brethren had lost sight of the ruling motive in all this : not so Mr. Darby. This design to connect Mr. Newton's *error*, as it was now called (his heresy as Mr. Darby termed it) with his prophetic scheme, evinced itself again : it was soon shown to be the point at issue. Mr. Darby wrote, "I have not the least doubt that Mr. Newton received his prophetic scheme, *by direct inspiration* of Satan." (Plain Statement, p. 16.) Again, "This is merely the root of all this grievous error, and connects Mr. N.'s prophetic scheme *inseparably* with his horrible views as to Christ." (Remarks J. N. Darby, p. 30.) And so one of his satellites takes up the song, "I don't know one who has embraced systematically this (Mr. Newton's) system, that has not fallen into open and *systematic untruth*." (Summary of the Meetings in London, V.)

The object of language like that is palpable enough. It was to follow up the blow which had been given, by a renewed effort to connect Mr. Newton's *error* with his scheme of prophecy—and to terrify those who might incline to think the *scheme* might be true, (though he even *had* erred on other points,) from continuing firm in *that* belief. It was in fact to say, that those who held by that scheme were *also* under delusion of Satan, and from them no other fruit than falsehood could be expected : or in plainer words it was to say, "If you receive Newton's prophetic system, you will be regarded and treated by us as under the delusion of the Devil, and *necessarily liars*!"

But that the grand object of these denunciations was to destroy Mr. Newton's prophetic system, is proved beyond all reasonable doubt, by the fact that the denunciators have, up to this hour, refused all communion with those who have in the most unequivocal language disclaimed participation in his supposed error. If that error had been *the thing* to be put down, the renunciation of it, and the separation from Mr. N. of the renouncers, *would* have been enough. But the refusal of Mr. Darby and his adherents to receive that renunciation as adequate proves that the error was not, in their estimation, the point at issue. On the contrary, he and *his* continued to stigmatize with secret adherence to, and sympathy with *the error*, all who would *not* renounce, or were supposed to be favourable to Mr. N.'s prophetic scheme, *though* they repudiated the supposed error. This is the key to the violence of the party of Mr. Darby against certain bodies in Bath and Bristol, &c., &c. Nothing but ultra violence against the person and entire views of Mr. Newton can ever satisfy them.

Another fact singularly significant in its way, was the setting up of a newspaper, called the Prospect. It emanated from Mr. Darby and his party alone, and its object was to follow up the blow supposed to have been struck against Mr. Newton's prophetic views, by a condensed energy of endeavour to force into prominence those of Mr. Darby ; in order that these might take root and supplant those which it was hoped so many violent storms had destroyed with Mr. N. himself. In the Prospect are found the most barefaced perversions of the plainest words of Scripture ; the remodelling of whole chapters ; particularly of the Epistles to the Thessalonians ; and the giving to them a meaning *not* obvious to *any* reader—a meaning which would not occur to any reader whatever without the roundabout method of destroying the plain and obvious meaning, which has been had recourse to by the writers in the Prospect.

I have now nearly done with the facts relating to this schism. I have traced them

in vain, if what has been written has failed to impress the reader with the plain and obvious inference that Mr. Darby affords a singular proof and instance of the truth of that word of God which declares that he who causes divisions serves not the Lord Jesus Christ, but his own belly. Mr. Darby has not served the Lord in any one thing he has done in this matter. But he has served his own belly—that is his own ends alone. We have seen one grand object continually kept in view, in all Mr. Darby has done, namely the destruction *by any means* of his adversary's prophetic scheme.

But was that in truth all Mr. Darby has sought? Is it indeed but a contest between two rival schemes of prophecy? Let not the reader think so; never was a delusion more profound than such a conclusion would amount to. The object of this contest is far deeper, and of far more perilous importance. Mr. Darby's object in destroying the prophetic scheme of his adversary is because its reception as truth cannot co-exist with, but utterly destroys his own, *doctrinal views*. It is very evident that Mr. Darby's own system of prophecy is only valuable to him *only* inasmuch as it aids those doctrinal views: inasmuch as it supplies something like a solution of prophecy yet unfulfilled, but perhaps shortly to be fulfilled. For the letter of that unfulfilled prophecy is calculated to *awaken*; *personally interest* and *terrify* every soul who reads therein; and his prophetic view is designed to meet, allay and remove all ground for that personal interest and alarm, by teaching that it has *no* application to the church, (that is to the *individual* Christian) except indeed as mere matter of curiosity. The kind of aid which Mr. Darby's prophetic view gives to his doctrinal view is therefore *collateral*. It gives to the church, (in other words, *every believer*) the comforting assurance that no evil is to be feared, for that they shall be removed out of it, and may live on, under his *doctrinal* views, in the persuasion that the Lord may remove them to bliss to-day or to-morrow. *That* is the tendency of Mr. Darby's prophetic view, and it arises out of, and is absolutely necessary to, his doctrinal view. This is his doctrinal view.

Under the outward semblance of exceedingly honouring the work of Christ, and of exceedingly magnifying the work of the Holy Spirit, the place of the church as *militant* upon earth, is utterly confounded with its standing as it shall be in heaven. The church upon earth is raised by his doctrine to a pitch of glory, as "**THE THING**," (which the disciples of this school term it.) Not only wholly beyond that which the Scriptures warrant, but beyond that which they give the least pretence or colouring for. In thus raising the church, Mr. D. implicitly and necessarily raises each individual of that church out of his proper place (the place which the Scriptures *do* assign him,) as a sinner, saved by grace alone, who, is to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. ii. 12.)

That is a brief analysis of Mr. Darby's doctrines, as plainly taught in his writings, and those of his adherents.

To bolster up that view, they have not hesitated to cut off all the saints of God, from Adam to Christ, whether patriarch, prophet, priest or king: and to assign to them *a lower place before God*, than that of the redeemed in Christ. In so doing they have *ignored* the fact, plainly and explicitly revealed, that salvation is *primarily* by grace, which was given, (to each one that shall be saved) according to the purpose of God *in* Christ Jesus, before the world began. (2 Timothy i. 9.)

To bolster up this doctrine, they have denied that the blood of Christ was pointed to (and therefore by faith available to) every man under the Old Testament dispensation. This, Mr. Darby has plainly and unequivocally done in pages 25—27 of his "*Remarks*." He quotes Mr. Newton's words, "God was too holy to propose any grounds of life to a sinful people except through mediation and atoning blood." This Mr. Darby terms a *monstrous statement* (Note to p. 27). Why is it monstrous to *him*? Clearly because, if *it be true* it annihilates his doctrine concerning the church, inasmuch as in that case it is plain there *was* redemption by faith of the blood of Christ, shed upon altars indeed, but signifying and pointing to his blood to be shed in due time, and *therefore* the standing before God of the saints of old, is clearly one and the same with that of the redeemed now. But is that statement *monstrous* or *is it true*? Let us see. God had said to the Jews, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an *atonement* for your souls; for it is the blood (i. e. it *points to the blood*) that maketh atonement for the soul." (Leviticus xvii. 11.) Now here is a blood given *for atonement*; but God has *also* said, "It is not possible that the blood of *bulls* and of *goats* should take away sins." (Heb. x. 4.) *Therefore* the blood which *did* make *atonement* for the soul was clearly *pointed* to only, that is *signified* by that of bulls and goats—given as foreshadowing that of the Lamb of God to be shed in due time—but most evidently available by *anticipation* to the Jews, as it is *to us* by *retrospection*. That statement is, therefore, not monstrous, but true—in accordance with revealed truth.

To continue. To bolster up their doctrine they have, finally, been driven to entire rejection of the truth of God concerning Christ, that *he came in the flesh*. This they have done both implicitly and explicitly in the assertion that he partook of the flesh of the children alone, and *not* of the flesh of man in general.

No one who believes and at all enters into the force of what God has said of the human heart, that "it is *deceitful above all things* and *desperately wicked*," (Jer. xvii. 9,) can fail to see that these doctrines throw open the door to entire Antinomianism. They will eventuate in high notions of *self*. To some, the thought will be a *secretly* actuating principle, while to others it will be an absolutely unavoidable inference, *either* that they are one with Christ in the impossibility to sin, *or* at the least, that sin *in the children* is an essentially different thing from sin in other men.

If a man has a loaded gun or pistol in his possession, he has that which is *adapted* to destroy life. Whether he is tempted to use it in such a way has nothing to do with *the fact*. The adaptation to destroy life remains, and remains in his hands. It is just so of these doctrines. They are adapted to sap and destroy the soul of him who holds them. Whether he is tempted to push them to evil, has nothing to do with *the fact*; the nature of the doctrines is not affected thereby; their adaptation to destroy the soul, remains, and remains with him who holds them. Read again Mr. Darby's own testimony to this effect. "It is a great mistake to suppose that because people have not *intelligently* received an evil doctrine they have not suffered by it. The plain, simple notion of Christ is *undermined*; and power against evil, and for good destroyed, *though the soul is unaware of it*. The sense of the evil is utterly enfeebled, and Christ *practically lost*." (*Remarks*,—J. N. Darby. Note to page 4.)

To conclude. No one can have read these pages without having come to the conclusion that the fall of Brethrenism is attributable *alone* to the departure from their own principles of those who had taken this stand before God and before man. A place of testimony at once against the world and against all other bodies of Christians.

In Mr. Darby, the departure began from the moment he had framed to himself a system of doctrine and of prophecy *apart* from the word of God ; and it was consummated when he violently divided the children of God. Its first fruit was schism, its end heresy.

In the great body of the Plymouth Brethren the departure began from the moment they turned from the injunction of God to *avoid* schismatics, and in lieu thereof *permitted* a schismatic to dictate *to them* ; and their departure was consummated when they were induced by him to excommunicate a servant of God, without so much as *once* appealing to the word of God, that they might know his mind upon heresy ; whether, that is, God, (their head and ruler,) had called what Mr. Newton had written, heresy, and whether he had *sanctioned* their excommunicating him as a heretic.

So long as they had continued *faithful* to the light they had received, God continued to bless them. When they *deliberately* set Him aside as their head and ruler, he set them aside too ; and from that hour to this they have been progressing from bad to worse. The word of God always means what it says. It is written of them that bite and devour one and other, that they *shall* be consumed one of another. This is rapidly progressing to fulfilment.

The state of the Brethren at this time may be briefly summed up. A few, perhaps two or three hundred, meet in Compton Street, Plymouth. They remain true to their principles, and have peace and blessing.

Next is a party, by far the largest, who stand upon what are called "*Bethesda grounds*." They are scattered through the kingdom, and have a term of communion apart from the broad principles of Brethren. It is in fact a mere device to exclude Mr. Newton, and his friends. This division of the Brethren has not gone the whole length of violence, though there is but a hair's breadth between them even there,—they will not (many of them) even eat on social terms with Mr. Newton's friends, though not objecting to do so with one *obviously* not a child of God. Besides they are 1st, *Not* meeting on Brethren principles. 2nd. They are both by implication and by *necessary* inference one with him in his views.

1st. By implication. Denial of truth is one and the same with the assertion of untruth. They *deny* the doctrine that Christ was mortal, that he derived mortality and sufferings from Adam, and that he was an Israelite. Herein is implied the assertion that Christ was not man. Neither a son of Adam nor a son of David ; which is nothing short of the Manichean heresy.

2nd. By necessary inference. Not only have they neither exposed, nor sought to expose Mr. Darby's actually heretical views ; but they have ever been willing to unite with him, if he would receive them without the imposition of *all* his views ; if he, that is, would quietly suffer his party to coalesce with theirs. But his determination to accept nothing short of the reception of *all* his views, and the utter rejection of those of his rival, has been hitherto the sole bar to this ;—not any regard to truth ;—the necessary inference of essential oneness is palpable.

If there needed proof of this, the following would establish it. Mr. J. D. Deck, a leader, who has hitherto stood on *Bethesda grounds*, published a

tract some while since, "*On receiving and rejecting Brethren from the Table of the Lord.*" Its object was solely to conciliate Mr. D. and his party, and to bring about reconciliation between them and his own party. Mr. Deck has since published a paper, to which I have adverted elsewhere, which plainly signifies his willingness to give up the truth itself, rather than it shall stand in the way. He has recanted, repudiated and abhorred the doctrine that Christ partook of mortal flesh and blood, because, he says, *mortal* and sinful are the same: and he has adopted Mr. Darby's view, that Christ partook of the flesh and blood of the children only, which is therefore not mortal in the sense of sinful. This paper was circulated with a view to its being read in all assemblies of Brethren meeting on *Bethesda grounds*. He who reads, and they who acquiesce in the reading of such papers as that are alike, *ipso facto*, one with Mr. Deck in his repudiation and abhorrence of the doctrine that Christ came in *the flesh*.*

The third party is that of Mr. Darby. They have received the very depths of his error. The ultra violence of their writings and conduct would be very disheartening if God's word were not true. "*Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you; that cast you out for my name's sake said, Let the Lord be glorified! but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.*" (Isaiah lxvi. 5.) There is, so I read in page 16 of the Retrospect, a fourth party who are neutrals.

And now I take leave of the reader. I have not sought to vilify the principles of Brethrenism, but to represent them as I believe they are. And to prove that *not* those principles, but departure from them, has brought about the ruin of Brethren. It is a sad and solemn thing to see on the one hand such obvious faithfulness on the part of God, and such miserable failure on that of man. It affords a new proof that no amount of light or blessing *can*, *in themselves*, keep *long* in control the desperate evil of the heart.

I do solemnly warn my reader, whatever may be his creed or denomination, that before he permits any one calling himself a brother, or who *is* so, to speak of principles which have been derided and set at nought, he do diligently enquire to which of these parties he belongs, lest under the outward guise of pure principles of truth he be, unawares, induced to take a serpent to his bosom. A serpent which has the power to destroy the soul; even the soul-destroying heresy, (disguised to deceive the unwary, but *real*) that denies that Christ came in *THE* flesh.

* Note.—He who bids God *speed* to falsehood is *partaker of the sin*. See 2 John 10.





